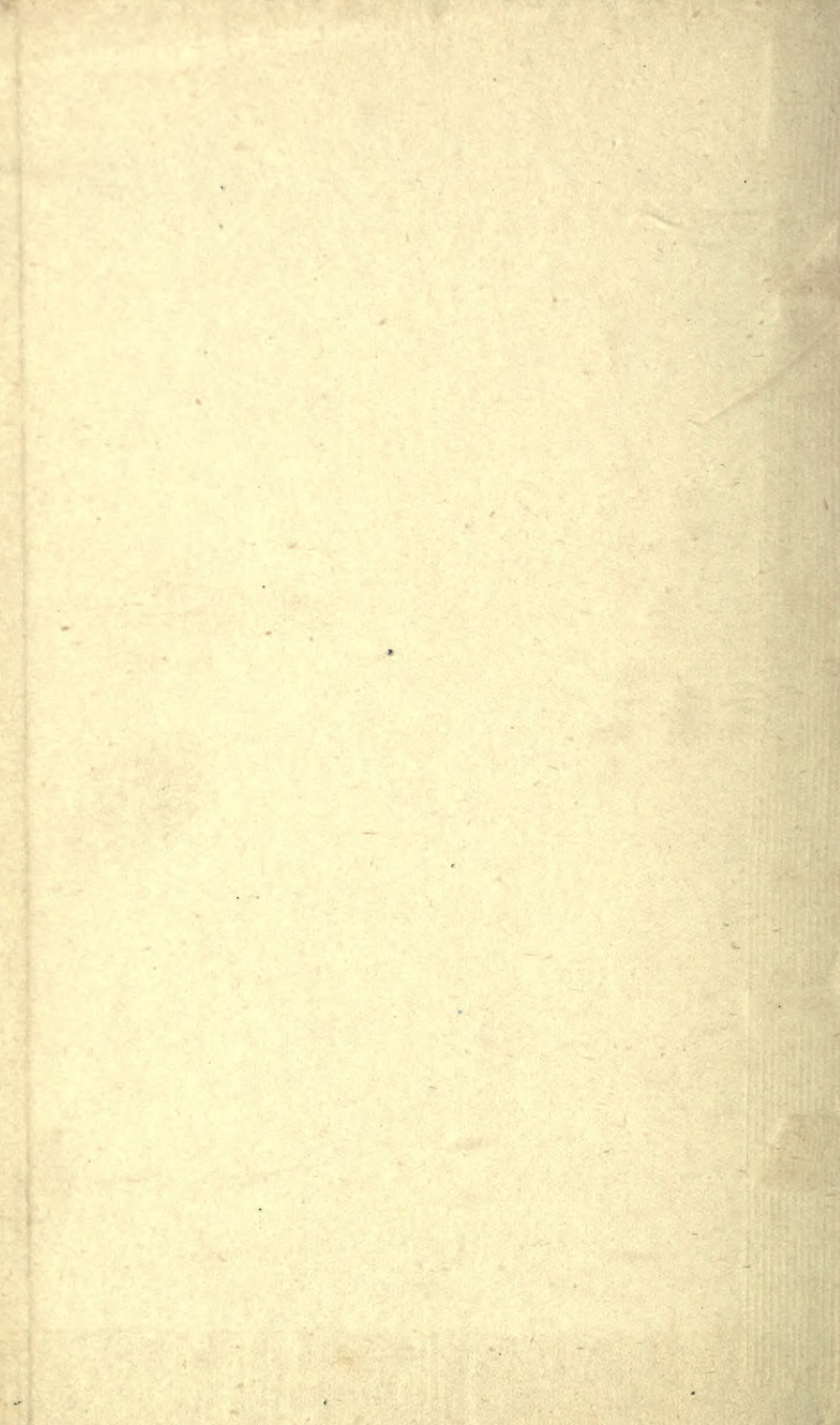


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FRIDGONDE,  
BRISTOL.

*W. Brown*



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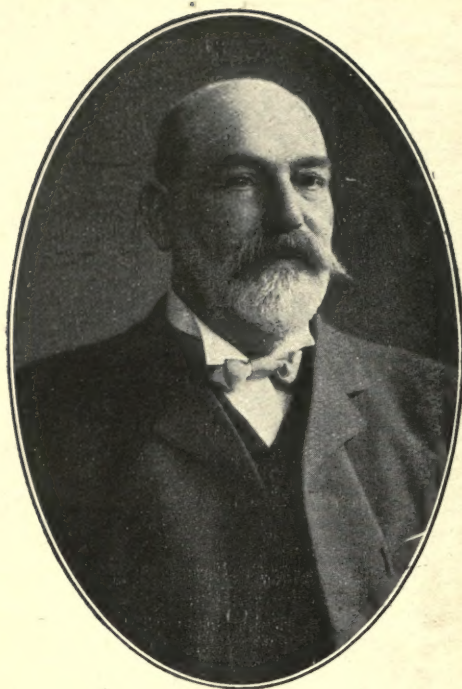
FISHPOUND,  
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THE BRISTOL STAGE









## MEMOIR

It was the irony of fate that the author of the following pages should have passed away on the eve of their publication. During a trying illness, lasting over six weeks, his thoughts and conversation were chiefly in connection with his work of "The Bristol Stage" and the theatre which he loved so well. At this time orders were arriving by every post, and when too feeble to open them himself he would listen with pleasure to the reading of letters from old friends wishing him and his book every success. He was a man of varied attainments, Journalist, Author, Playwright, a keen Mason and the founder of more than one Lodge. As a reciter he was wont to bring tears to the eyes of his audience, so feelingly did he render his subject. It is now many years since his best known plays, "The Faithful Heart," "Shadow and Sunshine," "Cast Adrift," and "God Save the Queen," have been seen in public : but there are many living who remember their success, especially "The Faithful Heart," which ran for over 1,000 nights.

As his Executor and son-in-law I trust his many friends and others will pardon the delay caused in the publication of these pages, which in the circumstances was unavoidable.

J. C. EWENS.



# THE BRISTOL STAGE

Its Story

TOLD BY

G. RENNIE POWELL, M.I.S.A.  
(RENNIE PALGRAVE)

PRICE 10/6 NET

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INSPIRED BY  
THE CENTENARY OF THE MACREADY MANAGEMENT  
[AND DEDICATED  
TO  
MRS. JAMES MACREADY CHUTE,  
PRINCE'S THEATRE,  
BRISTOL.





## PREFACE

**R** ESEARCH and memory have enabled me to compile this history, to the accomplishment of which object I have been impelled by a long and affectionate association with my subject.

So far back as A.D. 1804, there was a dramatic club, known as "The Wigs," the title being suggested by the varied assortment of hirsute adornments essential to complete stage representations. At the first meeting of the members, October 9th in that year, and under the presidency of "Stephen Kemble, Esq., Manager of the Theatre Royal, Newcastle, Théâtres North and South Shields, Durham, Scarborough, and various other places," Mr. J. Smith, of the Theatres Bath and Bristol, recited an original poem, "The Wigs," and upon acceding to a widely-expressed desire that he should publish it, penned the following preface : "If men in general reasoned on the broad scale of reflection, or knew the inconvenience attending a publication ; the hopes, fears, anxiety and apprehension that at intervals oppress and weigh upon the mind of an author (however fair he stands in the estimation of a liberal and generous public), they would cease to think lightly, much less to censure this or that production, seeing that it was done with a good intent."

G. RENNIE POWELL.

AUTHORS' CLUB,  
2, WHITEHALL COURT,  
LONDON, S.W.





# CONTENTS

	PAGE
CHAPTER I	
A.D. 1586 . . . . .	11
CHAPTER II	
A.D. 1764 . . . . .	22
CHAPTER III	
A.D. 1800 . . . . .	34
CHAPTER IV	
A.D. 1853 . . . . .	41
CHAPTER V	
A.D. 1858 . . . . .	50
CHAPTER VI	
A.D. 1862 . . . . .	59
CHAPTER VII	
A.D. 1864 . . . . .	64
CHAPTER VIII	
A.D. 1867 . . . . .	72
CHAPTER IX	
A.D. 1867 . . . . .	75
CHAPTER X	
A.D. 1868 . . . . .	86
CHAPTER XI	
A.D. 1871 . . . . .	91

---

## *Contents*

---

	PAGE
<b>CHAPTER XII</b>	
A.D. 1873 . . . . .	97
<b>CHAPTER XIII</b>	
A.D. 1876 . . . . .	105
<b>CHAPTER XIV</b>	
A.D. 1877 . . . . .	110
<b>CHAPTER XV</b>	
A.D. 1878 . . . . .	115
<b>CHAPTER XVI</b>	
A.D. 1881 . . . . .	123
<b>CHAPTER XVII</b>	
A.D. 1886 . . . . .	141
<b>CHAPTER XVIII</b>	
A.D. 1888 . . . . .	148
<b>CHAPTER XIX</b>	
A.D. 1893 . . . . .	155
<b>CHAPTER XX</b>	
A.D. 1898 . . . . .	167
<b>CHAPTER XXI</b>	
A.D. 1902 . . . . .	177
<b>CHAPTER XXII</b>	
A.D. 1908 . . . . .	189
<b>CHAPTER XXIII</b>	
A.D. 1915 . . . . .	199
<b>INDEX . . . . .</b>	<b>205</b>



## CHAPTER I

A.D. 1586

AT the beginning of the sixteenth century the time-honoured "Mummers," sole exponents within the city walls of the actors' art, yielded their position to the more cultured travelling actors who chanced this way, and a company of these, hailing from the metropolis, and visiting Bristol, A.D. 1532, were welcomed by leading citizens, who placed at their disposal for their stage performances numerous residential grounds, and eventually the Guildhall. These early records of Bristol's acquaintance with dramatic art, and that in somewhat extended detail, were well known to the stage companies of my early days—actors whose profession was their pride, their best loved recreation, and, in no few instances, their very lives! It was the custom for them, with a few congenial citizens, to assemble in the cosy quarters awaiting them at the "Llandogen Trow"—a tavern situated in the vicinity of the scene of their labours—and to the accompaniment of a long clay and silver tankard, submit themselves to the rule of an appointed president, whilst whiling away many an hour in the discussion of these and cognate subjects; outside being rain or hail, and all the world unpleasant. On more than one occasion within my memory, the debate turned on the possibility of William Shakespeare having been an actor in the city, and without occupying time in a recount of the various arguments adduced, but which I may claim to have been cogent, and well based upon all that is known of the earlier movements of the Bard, I will mention that the supposition mostly favoured was that, in search of actual experience of stage methods and technicalities, he found opportunity to associate himself with one of those of the more cultured bands of strolling players, such as were received with such marked favour upon visiting Bristol, and that long previous to his birth. Meeting with such a company, he accompanied them on their return to London, then making his initial excursion to the metropolis, and appearing at the Globe Theatre, Southwark, A.D. 1586!

Other subjects in this connection—although more remote from the Bristol stage—coming under review on these occasions, were the probable sequence of the Bard's plays (as viewed by veteran students of his works), and the handicap of the earlier Romeo exponents, who until more than sixty years subsequent to the production of the work, had to be enamoured of a male Juliet! Even the earliest effort to introduce the fair sex upon

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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the English stage not being until A.D. 1663, and then the Parisian troupe to whom the venture was due were "pippin-pelted" from the boards, and not until three years later, when Mrs. Margaret Hughes made her appearance as Desdemona at the theatre in Clare Market, London, were such efforts attended with success.

The earliest mention of a theatre existing in Bristol refers to the "play-house" situated in Tucker Street, and in close proximity to the "Fourteen Stars," a fine Elizabethan four-storey inn off Countess Street, adjoining. An "Order for the regulation of play-houses," published by Queen Anne on January 17th, 1704, and which prohibited "the acting of anything contrary to religion and good manners," apparently provided the "Society for the Reformation of Manners" with a deadly weapon with which to fight the theatre interest, the Mayor of Bristol being requested by the Common Council to prevent the players acting within the city, "by regard to the ill-consequences by the introduction of lewdness and de-dauchery by the acting of stage-plays." The Tucker Street play-house was closed, the building being converted into a Meeting-house—possibly for the use of the Society for the Reformation of Manners!

That all actors were not tarred with the Tucker Street brush was, however, speedily made apparent, as shortly after the eviction, a theatrical company, under the direction of Mr. Power, opened their dramatic season at a building in St. Augustine's Place, afterwards known as Lady Huntingdon's Salem chapel, and when within a couple of years they were "presented" by the Grand Jury at quarter sessions, so favourable was the report as to their proceedings, that no action was taken to restrict their further performances, and these probably continued pending the erection of the theatre at JACOB'S WELL. The provision of this early dramatic home was entirely due to the efforts of Mr. John Hippisley. Mr. Hippisley, although a man of education and an author, had commenced a theatrical career in the lowly character of "candle-snuffer," but advancing in the profession to the position of principal comedian—as evidenced by his being the original Peachum in Gay's "Beggar's Opera" on its production in 1728 at the theatre of Lincoln's Inn, London, and which then ran for sixty-three successive nights.

The auditorium of the Jacob's Well Theatre (forming three sides of a square) consisted of one large front and four smaller side boxes, front and side galleries, and an upper gallery to which the servants of those ladies and gentlemen occupying the boxes were admitted free, in order that they might be in attendance at the close of the performance. There were no upper boxes, but one side of the gallery was called "the balcony," whilst over the proscenium doors were the old-time "pigeon-hole" boxes. On special nights—such as the benefit of a favourite actor—the back of the stage was fitted after the style of an amphitheatre, scenery of course being, under the circumstances, impossible. Thus arranged, with the prices of admission ranging from one shilling to three, the house would represent



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## The Bristol Stage

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about £80—obviously a commodious house, having regard to the period of its erection.

Adjoining an inn—by name the “Malt Shovel”—the theatre faced the Clifton side of Brandon Hill, on the gravel path of which it was customary for numbers of citizens to assemble, in order to admire, or criticize, the brave costumes disclosed to their view as the box-patrons left their “chairs.” The stage accommodation was not so satisfactory as was that of the auditorium, and until much more recent years was hardly so in other theatres than that at Jacob’s Well. Here, with the amphitheatre erected for a “big house,” the acting area was a good deal cramped, and in order to get from the Prompt to the O.P. of the stage, members of the company had to go without the walls of the theatre, and pass from side to side across the field of Clifton Wood, and this they did to the intense gratification of numbers of “free-list” admirers who assembled there for the purpose of inspection and some “chaff.”

It is something to say for those good old days that the theatre was well patronized, and the seats generally filled, for the only method of reaching it from the city entailed a journey of nearly half a mile through an unlighted and ill-kept roadway. It will easily be appreciated, therefore, and especially so with the “Zepps. no lights” regulations well in our minds, that moonlight was of considerable moment to both management and patrons. Moreover, its advent saved the no little expense of “link-boys.” It was customary, therefore, to draw attention to moonlight periods on the play-bills. Mr. Richard Winstone, a great favourite here and a contemporary of Garrick and Woodward, preduced his benefit announcement with the star line “and on this night Madame Cynthia will appear in her utmost splendour.” The auditorium was crowded almost to suffocation, no one doubting that Madame Cynthia was some favourite French or Italian performer. But the evening’s programme being concluded, and that without the lady’s appearance, there were “calls” for Winstone to account for the omission of the attractive item. After making his best bow, the comedian humbly replied: “Ladies and gentlemen, although Madame Cynthia does not think fit to appear on these boards, she will cheerfully lend you assistance to get safely home, and I once more beg leave to congratulate you on its being a *fine moonlight night!*”

Amongst the actors seen upon the Jacob’s Well stage, and who may be regarded as Bristol’s pioneers, were many who were already first favourites with London audiences. Of these was Macklin, who was in Bristol in 1728.

MR. MACKLIN.—Born in 1690, in the county of West Meath, Ireland. Macklin—family name M’Laughlin—after some English experience in strolling player companies, made his *entrée* at the Lincoln’s Inn theatre, under the management of Rich, as a low comedian. His theatrical career was marked by numerous quarrels, and in May, 1735, during an alterca-

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## The Bristol Stage

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tion with Hallam over the possession of a wig, with his cane he struck his opponent in the eye and caused his death. He was subsequently brought to trial, but acquitted of any malicious intent.

Something of the gay Lothario he was, as shown in his devoted attention to the daughter of a gentleman residing near Jacob's Well, he having induced her to consent to his paying a clandestine visit after the performance on a specified occasion ; but when the evening arrived he found himself cast for the characters of both "Hamlet" and Harlequin, and consequently was upon the stage until late. Whilst on leaving the theatre he was overtaken by a violent storm of rain, and by the time he reached his lady's bower was wet to the skin. Opening the window, which by arrangement was left unfastened, he put one foot inside, but in doing so, upset a large bowl of water, the crash of which aroused the entire household. The fair daughter, first upon the scene, urging his quick departure, resulted in the actor making a hurried and undignified retreat ! In the sequel, the admired lady *never condescended to speak to him again !*

To Macklin was due the resuscitation of Shakespeare's "Merchant of Venice," after an absence of forty years from the stage, and he was, moreover, author of that fine comedy, "The Man of the World."

He retired from the stage in 1753, Garrick having granted him the use of Covent Garden theatre for his farewell benefit. Afterwards he kept a tavern in Covent Garden piazza, a public ordinary, including wine, price three shillings, together with his popularity, proving a great attraction to many authors, actors and others. He died July 11th, 1797, aged *one hundred and seven* years, his remains being interred in a vault under the chancel of Covent Garden Church.

MRS. PRITCHARD was another pioneer of the drama in Bristol. Ranging from Bartholomew Fair to Drury Lane, her career was remarkable. She retired after thirty-six years' experience, Garrick appearing as Macbeth on the occasion of her farewell, at which she played Lady Macbeth. She died at the age of fifty-seven years, a monument being erected to her memory in Westminster Abbey.

MR. WOODWARD.—Born in 1717, was educated at Merchant Taylors School. As a child he appeared as Peachum, in a juvenile performance of "Beggars' Opera" at Lincoln's Inn Fields, and followed the stage as a career, going through the entire gamut of pantomime "from a frog to a hedgehog, an ape and a bear, till he arrived at the summit of his ambition, *Harlequin !*"

Sheridan engaged him in 1747 for a winter season at Dublin, at a salary of £500, and on his return to England he was immediately secured by Garrick for Drury Lane.

With £6,000 that he had saved, and notwithstanding that he was in receipt of a princely salary, he joined with Mr. Barry in building a new theatre at Crow Street, in Dublin, in order to oppose Sheridan.

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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During his residence in the Irish capital the mob one morning beset the parliament house, in order to prevent the members passing an unpopular measure, and the ringleaders, thinking it advisable for some of the M.P.'s *not* to pass the bill, clamoured at Woodward's house, which was opposite—in College Green—calling repeatedly for a Bible, on which to do the swearing. Mrs. Woodward was greatly alarmed, as there was not a Bible in the house ; but her husband, as the result of a happy thought, threw them out a volume of Shakespeare, and rewarding him with three cheers, the ignorant rabble administered their oath to several of the Irish members of the House of Commons upon the works of Avon's bard.

Upon returning to Covent Garden, Mr. Woodward continued at the head of his profession until the winter of 1776, when, seized with an abscess near the kidneys, occasioned by jumping on a table in the character of Scrub, he was prevented further stage appearances, and died April 17th of the following year.

MR. HALE.—Tall and possessed of a striking personality, Mr. Hale was a favourite at the Wells' Theatre. So enamoured of the full-bottom wig was he that he assumed a fair flaxen one of that build when appearing as Charles I. As Hotspur he was very successful, but whether his head was thus adorned for that character history sayeth not.

MR. ROSCO.—A favourite comedian who upon retirement opened an academy at St. Michael's Hill, where Mrs. Rosco also had a boarding school for the education of young ladies.

MR. THOMAS KING.—Born in 1730, was articled to an eminent attorney, but paid more homage to the stage than to the law. Joining an itinerant company of players in May, 1747, in 1749 he became a member of the Bristol company. Mrs. Pritchard selected King to play Benedict to her Beatrice and Romeo to her Juliet, and so greatly successful was the performance that Whitchand, the then Poet Laureate, and author of "The Roman Father," who witnessed it, the following winter appointed young King as the representative of Valerius, in which he made a great reputation. In 1755 he became a manager of the Bath theatre, whilst in 1770 and 1771 he was a performer at, and sole manager of, our King Street Theatre.

After fifty-four years' stage experience, he took farewell of the public in a benefit performance at Drury Lane, speaking the following lines, written by Richard Cumberland, Esq. :—

"Whilst in my heart those feelings yet survive,  
That keep respect and gratitude alive;  
Feelings which, though all others should decay,  
Will be the last that Time can bear away."

In the green-room, surrounded by all the company, he was presented with a handsome silver cup and salver, the former being duly inscribed



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## The Bristol Stage

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with details of the occasion, and with the following quotation from "Henry V," Act 5 :—

" If he be not *fellow* with the *best King*,  
Thou shalt find him the best King of good *fellows*."

King died December 11th, 1805, and was buried in the churchyard of St. Paul, Covent Garden.

As an indication of the public enthusiasm existing in Bristol for Shakespeare's and other high-class dramatic works, it is recorded that a young woman who was in "a delicate state of health" could not be dissuaded from witnessing the performance of "Romeo and Juliet," with the result that, crossing Brandon Hill on her way home, a fine boy was born to her, and subsequently christened Romeo.

MISS PRITCHARD.—Daughter of the famous Mrs. Pritchard, and who was a great friend of Mrs. Hannah More, appeared at Drury Lane as Juliet in 1757, and subsequently married Mr. Palmer, of Jacob's Well.

MISS HALLAM was the daughter of the victim of Macklin's onslaught, her uncle being the manager of Goodman's Fields Theatre, and she was related to Mr. Rich, manager of Drury Lane. She made her *debut* at Jacob's Well on August 8th, 1760, the occasion being the benefit night of her aunt, Mrs. Barrington, subsequently as Mrs. Mattocks, of Covent Garden, enchanting the theatre-goers of the metropolis, whilst upon her retirement on June 7th, 1808, Their Majesties conferred upon her a pension of £200 a year.

MRS. GREEN.—Daughter of Mr. Hippisley, founder of Bristol's early reputation. Mrs. Green, who had appeared at the opening of both King Street, Bristol, and Orchard Street, Bath, theatres, was buried in Clifton Church. A handsome memorial there contains the following inscription : " Sacred to the Memory of Mrs. Jane Green. As a Comedian, she was many years deservedly admired in public, while in private life her virtues gained her distinguished esteem. She retired in 1780, and died August the 21st 1791, Aged 72 years."

MR. RICHARD WINSTONE, esteemed "the Father of the British Stage," being Macklin's senior. He performed with Garrick and Woodward, and at the revival of "Every Man in His Humour" at Drury Lane in 1750, Winstone played the part of Downright, in which he had scored at Jacob's Well.

A pupil of Quin, Mr. Ricahrd Winstone made his final stage appearance at King Street Theatre, Bristol, on June 11th, 1784, and died December 11th, 1788.

MR. CLARKE.—The leading comedian previous to the arrival of Mr. Powell. His first London appearance was in 1755, as Osmyn in the

tragedy of "Zara." He became one of the managers at King Street at the opening.

MR. BLAKE.—Personation of "the fop," also sang between the acts of the play. In 1743, at Drury Lane, he was in the company with Garrick, Barry, Mrs. Pritchard, Mrs. Clive, etc. He died in May, 1763.

MRS. PITT, a famous Nurse in "Romeo and Juliet" and such-like characters, was junior to Winstone and Macklin only in the dramatic profession, and for fifty years had appeared at Covent Garden and Drury Lane. Her last part was Dorcas in "Cymon," when she received a most enthusiastic encore for her song, "I tremble at seventy-two," although nearly that age at singing it. Mrs. Pitt died December 18th, 1799, at the age of seventy-nine years.

Mr. Hippisley had pre-deceased Macklin some half a century, expiring at his residence, near his theatre at Jacob's Well, on February 12th, 1748.

The subjoined play-bill issued during his management derives additional interest from the circumstance that it was with the comedy of the "Conscious Lovers" that upwards of twenty years later the theatre in King Street was opened to the public.

At the Theatre at Jacob's Well,  
On Wednesday next, the 15th June, 1743,  
Will be performed a Comedy called

Sir John Bevil	..	..	..	..	Mr. Harrington
Bevil, Junior	..	..	Mr. Hale	Myrtle	.. .. Mr. Casbel
Cymberton	..	..	Mr. Hippisley	Tom	.. .. Mr. Woodward
Sealand	..	..	..	..	Mr. Rosco
being the first time of his appearance on this Stage					
Humphry	..	..	..	Mr. Watts	Daniel .. .. Mr. Vaughan
Phillis	..	..	..	..	Mrs. Hale
Mrs. Sealand..	..	..	Mrs. Martin	Isabella	.. .. Mrs. Mullart
and the part of Indiana by Mrs. Pritchard					

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## The Bristol Stage

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To which will be added a Farce called

THE OLD MAN TAUGHT WISDOM,

OR

THE VIRGIN UNMASKED.

The part of Lucy by Miss Hippisley,  
being the first time of her appearance on this Stage.

Boxes, 3/-; Pit, 3/-; Balcony, 2/6; Gallery, 1/-.

To begin half an hour after six o'clock.

Tickets to be had, and places taken, at Mr. Hippisley's, near the theatre.

That Mr. Hippisley had conducted his theatre in an exemplary manner is clearly indicated, firstly, by the non-interference of the authorities with the performances, and further, by reason of the extensive patronage which—in spite of the inconvenience entailed in reaching the theatre—he received from all sections of the community. Only the year prior to his death there occurred an event which afforded the highest testimony to his good repute, this being chronicled in *The Oracle and County Advertiser* of July 18th, 1847, in the following paragraph:—

### MASONIC

Monday last was acted at the Theatre at Jacob's Well, to a crowded Audience, the celebrated Comedy called "Love for Love" written by Mr. Congreve before the Honourable Society of Free and Accepted Masons with the usual Prologue, Epilogue and Songs in Masonry.

The Play was ordered by the Rt. Hon. the Lord Viscount Kingsland (some time Grand Master) for the entertainment of the Brethren. His Lordship met the Society at The Bush Tavern in Corn Street about Six o'clock, from whence, the ceremony being settled, they set out about half an hour afterwards. The Procession was made in Coaches, four in a Coach; the Masons were properly dressed in the uniform of their Order, and His Lordship's Berlin and six Horses led the way.

Being arrived at the Theatre they alighted regularly as they came, and took the Places reserved for them in the Boxes according to Seniority.

Under the direction of Mrs. Hippisley, the Jacob's Well Theatre continued the home of drama until 1764, she being then succeeded by Messrs. Clarke, Palmer, and Winstone, members of the company.

Upon the last night of the season of 1764—set apart for the benefit of Mr. Winstone—a most unseemly scene was enacted by a section of the audience, something of the nature of riot prevailing for some time in the house. A tradesman having been arrested on a bond given for a defaulting friend, the sympathetic management and company had given a benefit for the family, but certain of the tradesman's friends had clamoured for a second night, a boon which the close of the season and the compulsory



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## The Bristol Stage

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departure of the principal artistes for London rendered impossible. Notwithstanding that the opening night of the ensuing season had been offered, the malcontents assembled in force, and upon the rise of the curtain, to the accompaniment of a storm of "boos" and hisses, discharged the ammunition, consisting of rotten apples, oranges, etc., with which they had come provided. It was necessary for the actors, the principal of whom—Mr. William Powell—led the way, to scale the proscenium and eject the rioters from the building, when, securing a supply of stones from Brandon Hill, they commenced a bombardment of the outer walls.

The disgusted managers turned their attention to the foundation of a new theatre in King Street, but there is evidence that the Jacob's Well building was reopened under other auspices, Chatterton penning the following caustic lines :—

"Lost to all learning, elegance and sense,  
Long had this famous city told her pence ;  
Av'RICE sat brooding in a white wash'd cell,  
And PLEASURE had a *but* at Jacob's Well."

The building must have long lain derelict, however, for in 1786, from Mr. William Meyler, a Bathonian, emanated the following elegy :—

Close to where Brandon's heights majestic rise,  
Your once famed theatre in ruin lies ;  
There, where decaying walls affright the eye,  
And threat destruction to the passers by,  
Where moths and spiders fix their dank abode,  
Where screams the screech-owl, and where croaks the toad,  
Emperors and Kings their gaudy temples built,  
And there whole armies oft their blood have spilt ;  
There triumph'd *Tamerlane*, there *Romeo* sigh'd,  
There *Lear* grew mad—there *Richard* raved and died ;  
There bright *Thalia*, mirth inspiring maid,  
Taught ravish'd Bristol ev'n to slight her trade ;  
But all those charms are fled, no perfum'd beau  
There, in green box, shall lounge an hour or so ;  
No thin, wan maid, from Clifton or the Wells,  
Wrapt in the drama, there her grief dispels ;  
Nor honest Jack, such wafted to our port,  
In corner snug, to Sally pays his court,  
Whence steering homeward by the moonlight scene,  
Tinges on Brandon's hill her gown with green ;  
By Time, rude leveller of small and great,  
*Troy's Towers* and *Jacob's Well* have shared one fate !

STOKES CROFT THEATRE.—That this establishment existed prior to the building of the Jacob's Well Theatre I fail to find any evidence, although I am aware that such has been in more than one quarter

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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accepted as correct; there is, however, no question of its being occasionally occupied during the years A.D. 1742-1745, but apparently by companies giving entertainment of a less scholarly type than was to be encountered at Mr. Hippisley's dramatic home, as the following advertisement in the *Oracle* of March 17th, 1743, would seem to indicate:—

At the Desire of several Persons of Distinction  
For the Benefit of

MADAM DOMINIQUE

(This being the last night of the Company's performing in Bristol)  
at the

*THEATRE IN STOKES CROFT.*

This present Saturday being March the 17th will be exhibited  
several extraordinary Performances

By a celebrated Company of Rope Dancers, Tumblers,  
Vaulters and Equilibrists.

Rope Dancing on the Tight Rope by Madem Germain

Particularly she will Dance with Rolls on her  
Ankles; also with Two Flags, in Jack Boots, and

Mons Dominique will beat the Drum and

Dance with two Boys tied to his Feet. He Will

likewise run up a board twenty Feet High, and  
throw a Somerset bakwards and forwards

Equilibries by the famous Russian Boy and

Mons Dominique; particular (by Desire Mons Dominique  
will perform an Equilibre on his Head

wherein he Eats and Drinks)

Tumbling by Mons Dominique, Signior Francisco

and the Clown by Master Pedro particularly

(by Desire, Mons Dominique will to the great

surprise of the Publick, Fly thro' a Hogshead

with a lighted Flambeaux in each Hand)

Master Pedro will, to the great surprise of the

Publick (tho' but 12 years of age) jump over

a Boy and a Horse.

To CONCLUDE with a Pantomime Entertainment called

THE FORCE OF MAGICK

OR THE

BIRTH AND ADVENTURES OF HARLEQUIN.

Tickets to be had at her Lodgings at the Swan in Stokes Croft, and at the usual Places.

N.B.—Madem Dominique being an entire Stranger in this Place, humbly hopes Gentlemen and Ladies will be so generous as to encourage her, the Performers being determined to use their utmost Endeavours to give Universal Satisfaction, and hope they'll permit this Acknowledgment of their Favour, and honour her with their Presence, this being the last night of their performing.

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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Whilst this from the same source of March 31st, 1744, is highly suggestive of Melodrama :—

*AT THE  
THEATRE IN STOKES CROFT*

On Monday the 2nd of April, will be acted a Tragedy  
call'd

VIRTUE BETRAYED

OR

ANNA BULLEN.

The part of King Henry VIII, by Mr. Marshall, Princess Elizabeth by a Girl of Six years Old. In which will be introduced the Grand Procession of the CORONATION of ANNA BULLEN, as performed in London with all the Peers and Peeresses, knights of the Garter, Knights of the Bath, Bishops, Kings and Heralds at Arms, etc. In their proper Robes and Dresses.

N.B. The Play opens with the Procession. The Song of Britons strike Home, with the Chorus by Mrs. Stepney.



## CHAPTER II

A.D. 1764

IT was in the year A.D. 1764 that a serious effort was made to erect a new theatre in a more accessible locality. A site in Lime Kiln Lane had found supporters, but the fact of Queen Square and Prince's Street then constituting the centre of fashion and opulence, College Green and its district following closely in the wake, whilst Park Street was but creeping into existence, Berkeley Square not dreamed of, and Clifton but a village consisting of a few straggling houses, a site in King Street gained the day and the theatre foundation stone was laid there on November 30th of that year.

The "faddist"—a weed of very ancient origin indeed—was, however, certainly not dormant during the seventeenth century. The Grand Jury led off a formidable opposition to the scheme with a petition to the Mayor and Aldermen, pointing out the pernicious effect of a theatre within the city liberties, it being regarded as that which will "exceedingly eclipse the good order and government of the city, corrupt and debauch our youth and utterly ruin many apprentices and servants already unruly and licentious." Some of Bristol's merchants and shopkeepers went, if possible, one better, stating "*we shall not keep our young men*, on play-nights, within the walls of our counting or warehouses"; and as to our wives and daughters, what will become of them? Especially was there also the opposition of "the people called Quakers"—these doubtless the conscientious objectors of the period. Nevertheless, the names of Quakers were to be found amongst those who sought the privilege (and possible cash profit) to be secured by subscribers to the building fund, Messrs. Richard and William Champion, sons of Nehemiah Champion, and Joseph Harford, father of John Scandret Harford—the purchaser of Blaise Castle estate, Henbury—being amongst the number.

But an extraordinary error which designed for Bristol a theatre eight feet larger than that of Drury Lane had been discovered on examination of the original plans, whereupon Mr. Thomas Symons, a solicitor, accompanied by Mr. Alexander Organ—Sheriff in 1767, and Mayor in 1787—both gentlemen proving enthusiastic in the enterprise, proceeded to London, where they surveyed and measured the Metropolitan theatres and employed Mr. Saunders, the stage-carpenter of Drury Lane, to

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## The Bristol Stage

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provide them with a ground-plan, elevation and section of the house, furnished with which serviceable drawings they returned to Bristol.

The enterprise was now tackled with energy, and on November 24th it was reported that "workmen were employ'd in order to lay the Foundation of the New Theatre in King Street," which a week later—as already stated—was pronounced "well and truly laid." It is almost superfluous to record with what feelings of horror such an event inspires the "C.O.'s" of the eighteenth century! But the following paragraph from *Felix Farley's Journal* of December 1st, 1764, throws some light on the subject:—

"Yesterday afternoon was laid the Foundation Stone of the new intended Theatre in King Street; which will be opened the beginning of next Summer with a play for the Benefit of the Bristol Infirmary." (Then, in italics, is the following): "What a melancholy Prospect it must afford to every considerate Mind, to observe with what Felicity Buildings of this Kind are erected, and at the same Time the Difficulty with which those set apart for religious Services are carried on."

In the issue of December 7th, the same journal gives publicity to a letter signed "A Fellow Citizen," and which is couched in the gentle language still so familiar to us from similar sources. After quoting the motto of the Bristol arms, "*Virtute et Industria*," he alludes to those, who, so much addicted to pleasure and dissipation, now think of little else but *gratifying* them to the full, even at the risk of ruining the morals of our youth, impoverishing our tradesmen, and artizans, promoting the arts of intrigue and of seducing the innocent, reducing many perhaps to bankruptcy, injuring the credit of others, and infusing an habit of idleness, indolence, and debauchery, throughout this *once industrious and virtuous city*.

Then followed the Presentation of the Grand Jury already referred to, and of which august body "A Fellow Citizen" might well have been a member, as the 700 words of its petition are greatly devoted to such expressions of opinion, or fact, as that the "acting of plays and interludes hath been attended with all manner of profeness, lewdness, murders, debauching, and ruining youth of both sexes."

Still, the promoters of the project turned ne'er a hair, but got on with the work!

The architect employed for the design of the theatre was Mr. James Paty; the builder, Mr. Gilbert Davis; the mason, Mr. Foote; and the smith, Mr. Franklyn; the interior being painted by Mr. Michael Edkins, under Mr. Simmons, "city painter," of whom it is recorded that Hogarth, when on a visit to the city, observing the sign of the "Angel Inn," Redcliff Street—the work of Simmons—said, "that is the artist who should have executed the altarpiece in Redcliff church." The scenery employed at the opening was executed by Mr. John French, a pupil of Loutherbouurg. The circle—as originally constituted—consisted of nine boxes, to distin-

## The Bristol Stage

guish which the names of the following dramatic poets, in gilt letters, appeared over the doors : for the centre box, that of Shakespeare ; on the right of this, Johnson, Vanburgh, Row and Steele ; and on the left, Fletcher, Congreve, Otway and Cibber, whilst the eight upper side boxes bore the names of Garrick, Witcherley, Addison, Farquhar, Dryden, Lee, Shadwell and Colman. In the centre of the latter was the gallery !

The theatre—the first cost of which was upwards of £5,000—was designed to provide seating accommodation for 1,600 persons, the available space being thus apportioned :—

Boxes	..	..	..	..	750, producing	£150
Pit	..	..	..	..	320	„ 40
Gallery	..	..	..	..	530	„ 39.15
					1,600	£229.15

To meet the initial expense were forty-eight subscribers of fifty pounds each, these being entitled to a silver ticket giving free admission to every kind of performance at the theatre, and transferable *for the season*, two tickets only, issued to one Edward Crump and his wife for services rendered to the proprietors, being transferable for every night. There were, however, several forged tickets in circulation, the result, it was said, of the carelessness of the silversmith entrusted with the manufacture and issue of the genuine article. A lady, winning a silver ticket in a raffle, gave it to her son, who on presenting it at the theatre was refused admission, it being pronounced a forged one. On his return home he found—taking tea with his mother—a solicitor friend, who requested leave to assert the right of admission on the ticket. The manager of the theatre—Mr. Dimond—knowing that it was not possible to prove this ticket to be one of the spurious ones, gave way. After making use of it during three successive seasons, the lawyer returned it to the lady, together with his bill of costs : “To many attendances at the theatre to assert your right of admittance by the Ticket No. —, £15.”

The opening performance at the King Street Theatre was given on May 30th, 1766, under the joint management of Messrs. Powell, Arthur and Clarke, who had taken a lease of the theatre for seven years. All three managers had already achieved a local reputation in connection with the theatre at Jacob's Well.

The theatre was, however, as yet without a licence, and there still being a strong opposition to theatrical representations in the city, it was deemed advisable, in order to evade the statute which sent all performers in unlicensed theatres to the house of correction as rogues and vagabonds, to adopt the following as the announcement of the occasion :—



# The Bristol Stage

## AT THE NEW THEATRE IN KING STREET.

This present Friday, the 30th May, 1766, will be performed

### A CONCERT OF MUSIC

Boxes, 4/—; Pit, 2/6; Gallery, 1/6.

The doors will be opened at five o'clock, and the Concert begin exactly at six.

### VIVAT REX ET REGINA.

N.B.—The profits arising from this Concert is intended to be presented towards the support of the Bristol Infirmary.

Between the parts of the Concert will be exhibited, gratis, a SPECIMEN OF RHETORIC diversified in the several characters of a Comedy, called

### THE CONSCIOUS LOVERS

Young Bevil .. ..	..	..	..	..	Mr. Powell
Myrtle.. ..	..	..	..	..	Mr. Perry Mr. Sealand .. .. Mr. Walker
Sir John Bevil ..	..	..	..	..	Mr. Wins one Cymberton .. .. Mr. Artbur
Tom (with a song in character) ..	..	..	..	..	Mr. Dyer
Humphrey .. ..	..	..	..	..	Mr. Moxeen
Daniel .. ..	..	..	..	..	Mr. Smith Servant .. .. Mr. Buck
Phyllis .. ..	..	..	..	..	Mrs. Green
Lucinda .. ..	..	..	..	..	Miss Read Isabella .. .. Mrs. Barrington
Mrs. Sealand.. ..	..	..	..	..	Mrs. Pitts Indiana .. .. Mrs. Barry

In Act the Second, singing by Mr. Dodd.

A new Prologue and Epilogue, written by D. Garrick, Esq.

With dancing by Mr. Aldridge,

To which will be added a Farce, called

### THE CITIZEN

The Citizen .. ..	..	..	..	..	Mr. Dodd
Old Philpot .. ..	..	..	..	..	Mr. Bennett Beaufort .. .. Mr. Perry
Sir Jasper .. ..	..	..	..	..	Mr. Winstone Dapper .. .. Mr. Moxeen
Young Wilding ..	..	..	..	..	Mr. Smith Quildrive .. .. Mr. Buck
Marion .. ..	..	..	..	..	Miss Read Corinna.. .. Mrs. Perry

Tickets and Places to be taken of Mr. Heath, Box-keeper, at the Theatre.

Printed by Nr. Hooke, in the Maiden Tavern, Baldwin Street.

After deducting the expenses, the benefit resulted in £63 being contributed to the funds of the Infirmary.

The prices of admission quoted above were for this evening only, subsequent charges being: Boxes, 3s. 6d.; Pit, 2s. 6d.; Gallery, 1s. 6d.

The Prologue, with which David Garrick had supplied the management, was spoken by Mr. Powell:—

“ Before you, see one of your stage-Directors,  
Or, if you please, one of those strange projectors  
Whose heated brain, in fatal magic bound,  
Seeks for that stone which never can be found.

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## The Bristol Stage

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But in projection could the dreadful stroke,  
The glasses burst, and all is bounce and smoke !  
Though doubtful, still our fate—I bite my thumbs,  
And my heart fails me,—when projection comes,  
Your smiles would chase our fears ; still I could dream,  
Rich as a *nabob*, with my golden scheme !

That all the world's a stage, you can't deny ;  
And what's our stage ? A shop—I'll tell you why—  
You are the customers, the tradesmen we ;  
And well for us you pay before you see :  
We give no trust, a ready-money trade ;  
Should you stop payment, we are bankrupts made.  
To feast your minds, and sooth each worldly care,  
We'll largely traffic in dramatic ware,  
Then swells our shop, a warehouse to your eyes,  
And we, from small retailers, merchants rise.

From Shakespeare's golden mines we'll fetch the ore,  
And land his riches on this happy shore !  
For we, theatre merchants, never quit,  
The boundless store of universal wit,  
But we in vain shall richly laden come,  
Unless deep water brings us safely home ;  
Unless your favour in full tides will flow,  
Ship, crew, and cargo, to the bottom go !

Indulge us, then, and from our hearts receive  
Our warmest wishes—all we have to give.  
May honoured Commerce, with her sails unfurl'd,  
Still bring you treasures from each distant world ;  
From East to West extend this city's name,  
Still to her sons increasing wealth with fame ;  
And may this merit be our honest boast,—  
To give you pleasure, and no virtue lost."

Garrick's Epilogue was spoken by Mr. Arthur :—

" In days of yore, it was a constant rule,  
That every knight should have his 'squire and fool ;  
When forth the hero went, they followed after,  
One bore his shield, the other rais'd his laughter ;  
The stage should have them all, but prudent, we  
Join 'squire and fool in one, and I am he !  
Our hero in the prologue took his rank,  
*Don Quixote* he, and I his *Sancho Panc.*  
If ours should prove a windmill scheme, alas !  
I know, and I will tell you what will pass :  
We all—each son of *Thespis*, and each daughter,  
Must for sweet *Bristol Milk* drink *Bristol Water* :

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## The Bristol Stage

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Which, though a cure for some who fall away,  
Yet we, poor souls! should feel a quick decay;  
The wisest face amongst us will look silly,  
And mine will change its roses for the lily.  
But how prevent this terrible condition?  
There is one way—be you our kind physician:  
For you with other doctors disagree,  
And when you make your visits, *give* a fee.

‘Hold!’ cries a Prude (thus rising from her stays)  
‘I hate a Playhouse, and their wicked plays;  
O! ’tis a shame to suffer such an evil  
For seeing plays is dealing with the Devil!’  
‘I beg your pardon Madam, ’tis not true;  
We players are moral folks—I’ll prove it too.  
Man is a froward child—naughty and cross,  
Without his rattle and his hobby horse;  
We play’rs are little master’s bells and coral,  
To keep the child from mischief—a’nt we moral?  
In such a happy, rich and crowded place,  
What would become of the sweet babe of grace?  
Should you not act unkindly to refuse it.  
This little harmless plaything to amuse it?  
Good plays are useful toys—as such enjoy ’em;  
Whene’er they make you naughty—*then* destroy ’em.’”

MR. WILLIAM POWELL.—Bristol had probably never possessed so great a stage favourite as Mr. William Powell, who after three years at Drury Lane and becoming joint patentee of Covent Garden, came to Jacob’s Well Theatre in its last season, and was senior lessee of that in King Street in its first.

During his early appearance at the former house, a literary citizen wrote: “A theatrical mania began to rage in Bristol. Powell was the chief subject of conversation at our coffee-houses, taverns, and tea tables, and any one who had not seen and applauded his performances must (like Lady Teazle) never have pretended to any Taste again.”

On the occasion of his first benefit (at Jacob’s Well), he appearing as “King Lear,” the programme contained the following announcement: “The Balcony will be made convenient, and laid with Boxes where servants will be admitted to keep places. To prevent mistakes, Ladies are desired to send their servants by *Four o’clock*.” A three hours’ wait for flunkedom! Nor was the favouritism of Mr. William Powell confined to Bristol, for London shared it, he having at Drury Lane played the leading parts with unqualified success during no less than one hundred and thirty consecutive performances.

A contemporary critic described him as “possessing superlative ability,” whilst another, referring to his performance of “*Virginius*,” said, “the



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## The Bristol Stage

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character seemed pencilled by the poet for this actor. . . . Powell was the Roman Father in every line, in every action."

He died on July 3rd, 1769, of pneumonia, occasioned through his throwing himself upon the grass whilst divested of his clothing, after playing in a strenuous game of cricket. During his illness the utmost sympathy was shown on all sides, the roadway about the theatre—near to which he resided—being covered with straw, and, by the order of the magistrates of the city, chains placed across the thoroughfare to prevent carriage traffic. The intelligence of his death reached the stage just as the curtain rose upon a performance of "Richard the Third," and in chronicling the scene it is stated that "the fictitious lamentations for the loss of King Edward (Act 2) were converted into real anguish, the actors appearing on the stage with streaming eyes, whilst their broken voices necessitated the manager—Mr. Holland (a pupil of Garrick)—apologizing for their incapacity to acquit themselves as usual. Upon learning the cause of the performers' grief, and that the actor whom they had so admired had passed from them for ever, the audience sadly dispersed before the completion of the programme."

The deceased theatrical favourite was buried in the Cathedral, a handsome marble monument being erected there to his memory, the funeral *cortège*, proceeding from King Street, being met at the foot of College Green by the Very Reverend the Dean—by whom the burial service was conducted—and by the Cathedral choir, who sang an anthem.

MR. SHUTER.—Yet amidst this scene of solemnity was one discordant touch, the which could have been nothing else than painful to the vast congregation of citizen mourners, and especially to those of the deceased's *confreere*. It was occasioned by Mr. Shuter, a favourite low-comedian at both Jacob's Well and King Street theatres. The son of a clergyman, Shuter had acted as a billiard-marker, his levity of manner and sense of humour at which time had prepared his road to the stage. Unfortunately he intruded his stage characteristics at the funeral of his brother actor, for, attired in a scarlet waistcoat trimmed with broad gold lace, and a gold-laced hat, Shuter approached the Cathedral door, then closed to keep out the crowd, and giving several knocks upon it with his cane, in melodramatic tones declaimed the lines spoken by Romeo whilst breaking into the tomb of the Capulets:—

"Thou detestable maw, thou womb of death,  
Gorg'd with the dearest morsel of the earth,  
Thus! I enforce thy rotten jaws to open,  
And, in despite, I'll cram thee with more food!"

I have not been able to find that Shuter was possessed of any less regard for the deceased than were his brother professionals, and am disposed to attribute this ill-timed levity to a desire to maintain his reputation of *sangfroid*.

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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On the 14th of the following month, at a performance of the "Roman Father," given for the benefit of Mr. Powell's family, the crowded audience was mostly habited in black, and the theatre is said to have worn the appearance of general mourning.

The season closed on September 11th, Holland, who appeared as Alexander the Great, taking his last benefit. So crowded was the house that a man was thrown from the gallery to the pit, but upon being bled and stimulated with restoratives in the green room, felt well enough to witness the remainder of the play; a few days afterwards he died.

Neither did Holland long survive his friend and fellow comedian, William Powell, dying of small-pox on 7th of December following.

The efforts of David Garrick enabled the relatives to secure from the Duke of Devonshire permission to place a Monumental Inscription, written by the great tragedian, in the chancel of Chiswick church, and there it is, or was quite recently, to be seen.

BATH AND BRISTOL, or, by reason of the recognized right of seniority, should it not be "Bristol and Bath"?

Until the year 1755 Bath was not in possession of a theatre, or any establishment to which such a title would not have been a misnomer. That several buildings had from time to time been thus designated is true, the chief of these being that which was conducted on the site of the present Mineral Water Hospital. In dealing with this subject, the historian of "The Annals of Bath" states that the standing expense of the enterprise was £2 10s. per night, which sum included the cost of music, attendants, bills and tallow candles. The holding capacity of the auditorium represented at the full £30, one-half of the profits being payable to Lady Hawley—beneath whose ball-room the theatre was situated—for the use of scenery, dresses, etc., the remainder of the profit being devoted to the payment of the twelve performers! But we are told by the same historian that the venture "met with very indifferent encouragement and the performers were hardly able to support themselves," which last-named statement I think we might well believe.

The "new theatre" is described as "simply a room about fifty feet long by twenty-five feet wide," whilst the establishment beneath the ball-room at Simpson's Assembly Rooms was irreverently designated "a cellar."

But in 1747 Mr. Hippisley—who, as has been seen, for between a quarter and half a century had conducted at Jacob's Well a theatre, cordially recognized and sheltering the *elite* of London's theatrical profession—commenced at Bath the campaign which resulted in the erection of a new theatre in Orchard Street, Bath, his death, during the year following, preventing his witnessing the fructification of his plans.

In the person of Mr. Palmer, a brewer, Bath fortunately possessed a

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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citizen capable and willing to carry through the scheme upon which the Bristol lessee had set his heart, and which, moreover, he had practically carried out; but it was not until some ten or twelve years later, when Palmer junior took the reins in hand, that real success attended the theatre of the sister city.

At a cost of £1,000 he had greatly improved the theatre, and in 1768 secured for it a Royal Patent. In 1777 he secured the lease of the theatre in King Street, Bristol, for which he succeeded in also securing the Royal Patent.

All that Palmer had done for the theatre of his native city, he readily duplicated for that of Bristol, adding to it the gallery and completing the upper box tiers, the central reach of which had hitherto done duty for the gallery patrons. Palmer's lease was for twenty years, the rental being fixed at £200 per annum, but as a contribution towards the expense of the alterations, the first three years of rent were written off.

The scheme of management, in order to admit of the company appearing in both cities, was that there should in Bristol be three performances each week during the summer months, and once only weekly during the winter. The season of Lent was to be devoted to the performance of Oratorio, six of these being given in 1880. This portion of the arrangement for Bristol does not appear, however, to have proved quite successful, two Oratorios only being performed during each of the two succeeding Lenten seasons.

Neither could the preponderance of the dramatic nights in Bath have resulted quite as anticipated, for after June 11th, 1781, the company was removed to Bristol, and three performances became the weekly lot of each city throughout the year.

The following was the preliminary announcement as to the Bristol theatre's re-opening under the Royal Patent :—

### *THEATRE ROYAL, BRISTOL.*

On Monday next, the 30th of November, 1778  
(By His Majesty's Company of Comedians)  
will be presented, A COMEDY call'd

### AS YOU LIKE IT.

JAQUES .. .. by MR. JEFFERSON  
(From the Theatre-Royal, Drury Lane, being his  
first appearance on this Stage)

Duke Senior.. .. MR. SWINDELL  
Sylvius .. .. by MR. BLANCHARD

(Being their first appearance here)



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## *The Bristol Stage*

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Oliver .. .. . Mr. HUDSON  
Amiens (with songs in Character), by Mr. CUBITT  
Touchstone .. .. . by Mr. T. KENNEDY  
Corin .. .. . Mr. BLANCHARD, Senior

William, Mr. COLLIN

(being his first Appearance here)

And the parts of ADAM and ORLANDO by Mr. Foot  
and Mr. Wolfe (From the Theatre in Exeter,  
being their first Appearance on this stage)

Cella .. .. . by Mrs. SHARP  
Phoebe .. .. . by Mrs. MASTERS  
Audrey .. .. . by Mrs. THORNTON

(Being their first Appearance here)

And ROSALIND (with the Cuckoo song) by Mrs. TAPLIN

A PROLOGUE to be spoken by Mr. JEFFERSON

End of the PLAY. A HORNPIPE by Mr. T. BLANCHARD  
To which will be added

A FARCE, etc.

as will be expressed in the Bills of the Day.

Boxes, 4/-; Pit, 2/6; Gallery, 1/-, at which prices,

No half price can possibly be taken.

The Doors will be opened at FIVE, and the Curtain drawn up a quarter after six o'clock precisely.

Places to be taken of Mrs. Walker, at the Office in King Street, from Ten till Three o'clock.

CONSTANT FIRES HAVE BEEN KEPT, AND THE THEATRE  
THOROUGHLY AIR'D.

VIVANT REX AND REGINA.

Palmer had in his Theatre Royal, Bath, company, Mrs. Siddons, who in the year following its opening was at the Theatre Royal, Bristol, also. Not that her engagement brought to either house at the time any especial glamour, for her appearance at Drury Lane as Portia to Garrick's Shylock had been anything but successful. Her beauty had certainly been greatly admired, but her histrionic abilities had been voted immature.

Not to be greatly wondered at, surely, either the circumstance or the criticism, for whereas the performance in question had taken place in 1775, the fair tragedienne was then barely twenty years of age, being born July 5th, 1755, at Brecon, where her father, Roger Kemble, an actor, was then appearing.

Merit, especially stage merit, speaks, however, "with miraculous organ," and as early as February 9th, 1782, her benefit at Bath, where she resided, realizing £146, being the limit of the theatre's possibilities,

## *The Bristol Stage*

necessitated another fixture with the same purpose, and this, on May 21st, added the sum of £145 to the previous total. Her farewell at King Street was on June 17th of the same year, and £106 15s. resulted, as Bristol's contribution.

Upon returning to the London boards she fairly took the world by storm, reaching the very pinnacle of histrionic ambition, which proud position she retained up to her retirement in 1812.

The following programme is of interest, being that of a performance under the management of Messrs. Dimond and Kearsberry, two favourite actors of the company to whom Mr. Palmer had in 1785 transferred his theatre licences:—

### *THEATRE ROYAL, BRISTOL.*

this present Wednesday, the 10th October, 1787, will  
be performed a COMEDY called

#### SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER

Young Marlowe .. .. .	Mr. Dimond
Hastings (with a song in character) .. ..	Mr. Wordsworth
Sir Charles Marlowe .. .. .	Mr. Rowbotham
Diggory .. .. .	Mr. Jackson
Stingo .. .. .	Mr. Bristow
Jeremy .. .. .	Mr. Summers
and Tony Lumpkin .. .. .	Mr. Knight

being his second appearance on this stage

Mrs. Hardcastle .. .. .	Mrs. Didier
Miss Constance Neville .. .. .	Miss Summers
and Miss Hardcastle .. .. .	By a young lady

being her first appearance on any stage.

End of the Play A NEW DANCE call'd

### *THE SPANISH LOVER*

by MASTER and MISS MITCHELL

To which will be added, a MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENT, called

#### *THE FLITCH OF BACON*

Major Benbow .. .. .	Mr. Powell
Justice Benbow .. .. .	Mr. Blissett
Captain Greville .. .. .	Mr. Incledon
Patty .. .. .	Mr. Summers
Kilderkin .. .. .	Mr. Bristow
Tipple .. .. .	Mr. Jackson
Captain Wilson .. .. .	Mr. Fox

being his second appearance on this stage

and Eliza .. .. .	Miss Sbarrock
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## The Bristol Stage

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To begin precisely at *Half past Six* o'clock.

Tickets and places for the Boxes to be taken of Mr. Walker at the Box Office of the Theatre, where attendance will be given.

The Ladies and Gentlemen frequenting the Theatre, to prevent Disturbance, or Trouble, in getting to their Carriages, are most respectfully requested to give orders to their Servants, to set down with their Horses' Heads towards the *Back* and to take up towards *Prince's Street*.

Printed by J. Rudhall, in Small Street, Bristol.

MR. ELLISTON.—Towards the close of the eighteenth and for some three or four years of the nineteenth century, an actor of rare ability graced the Bristol stage, and whilst so engaged received the most signal evidence of royal favour, in that for some half-a-dozen "command" performances he, Robert William Elliston, was compelled to divide his attention between the Theatre Royal and Windsor, where his appearance was welcome, not only to His Majesty, King George III, but also to his consort, Queen Charlotte and the distinguished personages of the Court. This was an arduous task, however, necessitating his travelling to Windsor or Bristol at the close of his performance and throughout the night, from either point. But whether in Bristol, Bath, Windsor, or London, Elliston drew large audiences, a benefit at Drury Lane realizing for him £600, whilst his ordinary engagements were at very ample figures. Several efforts by him at management, however, were of a disastrous nature, one of these being his taking Drury Lane theatre at £10,200 per annum, and he became a bankrupt. Elliston took too many liberties with the wine bottle, and I have been given to understand that, whilst on a professional visit to the United States, and when honoured with the presence of the President, his condition was too palpable to evade censure, and many of the audience, resenting what they regarded as an insult to his distinguished patron, vented their indignation by palpably "hissing." Elliston walked off the stage, and the curtain was lowered. The manager, doubtless troubled as to the reputation of his theatre, said, "Really, Mr. Elliston, you must endeavour to appease them," whereupon the famous actor, going before the curtain, thus addressed the house: "Ladies and gentlemen, I have had the distinguished honour of appearing, by royal command, and being applauded by his Majesty, King George the Third! Do you think then that I have travelled from Windsor to here to be hissed by the chief of the Yankee-Doodles?" How Elliston left the theatre was known to a few only, but he did not return to his hotel.

Born in London in 1774, Elliston, having fallen from his high estate as an actor, died, at the age of fifty-six, in extreme poverty.



## CHAPTER III

A.D. 1800

THE opening of the nineteenth century marked a period of ill-fortune, both for the Bristol house and for the Theatre Royal, Bath, the management of the latter still having control in both cities. In 1805 a new Theatre Royal for Bath was erected in Beaufort Square, the house in Orchard Street being converted into a place of worship, and subsequently becoming the Masonic Lodge, to which purpose it is still devoted.

In 1817 the lease of the Bristol Theatre Royal was acquired by Mr. John Boles Watson, who already having the theatres at Gloucester and Cheltenham as strings to his bow, declined to continue the old-time association of Bristol with the sister city, it not being until A.D. 1845 that these relations were resumed.

The tenure of the Bristol Royal by Mr. J. B. Watson was neither lengthy nor prosperous, and until March of the year 1819, when the lease reverted to Mr. William McCready, no shadow of prosperity was discernible in connection with that house.

Mr. McCready, however, in addition to being an acceptable actor and possessed of [no little experience in provincial management, held a remarkable asset in the person of his son, the world-famous tragedian, William Charles Macready.

Historians speak of "strained relations" as existing between father and son at about this time; be this as it may, the great actor hurried to his father's aid, and, bringing with him Mr. Terry and Mrs. Yates from Covent Garden, inaugurated on March 29th, 1819, the new management of the Theatre Royal, King Street, with much *éclat*, his subsequent visits being frequent—as constant, indeed, as the metropolitan dramatic vacations permitted. It is possible, however, that not all visits were solely dictated by the desire to enrich the parental treasury, for the great tragedian had fallen in love with Miss Atkins, a prominent member of his father's dramatic company, and the two were wed. Mr. William Charles Macready made his last appearance in Bristol in 1851, the year that witnessed his retirement from the stage.

It certainly was not to a "dream of Fairyland" that the new lessee had bent his steps, the occasionally opened theatre, with its dirty and rain-stained paper and decorations, oil lighted, and with an insufficiency of lamps at that, making it better fitted to the title of the "Cave of Gloom."

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## The Bristol Stage

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The worst feature with which he had to contend in Bristol he quickly recognized—the absence of interest the citizens took in dramatic fare. It was for that reason that he “led off trumps,” and opened with his son in his great creation of “Othello.”

From that moment, as circumstances permitted, he was ceaseless in improving the conditions of his theatre, and on August 30th in his opening year had substituted the new coal-gas lighting for that of the oil lamps, his son appearing on that occasion as “Hamlet.”

Other improvements followed rapidly, and barely a couple of years after his settlement in Bristol a worthy couple named Morris—keepers of a fish shop—in returning to their home from a visit upon the Somerset side of Cumberland Basin, the place being badly lighted, missed the swing bridge, and falling into the lock, were both drowned. Mr. Morris was a Freemason, and the brethren of the Province raising a fund for the orphan children, Bro. McCready generously lent his theatre for a benefit, and the £190 which resulted brought the fund to £500.

In the autumn of the following year—shortly after the coronation of George IV—Mr. McCready produced a little play designed to introduce a pageant, such as in these times we associate with Drury Lane. A few of the characters in the piece represented country folk, who had presumably journeyed to London to see the “crowning,” and this circumstance afforded the *raison d'être* of the affair, they standing to witness the gorgeously clad procession, the extent of which took a considerable time in crossing the stage. Then the coronation in Westminster Abbey which followed was a splendidly grouped spectacle. To render the *mise en scène* complete, the lessee had engaged for the pageant the trained horse “Cato,” which Mr. Dymock, the champion, was understood to have ridden at the coronation itself. The centre box of the dress-circle was adapted to Cato’s requirements, and with a viaduct therefrom to the stage, and amidst the blaring of trumpets, the champion in a complete suit of mail, and attended by his heralds and esquires, rode boldly forth, “Cato” curvetting along the passage way on to the stage and amidst the coronation group. Here, throwing down his gage, the champion gave challenge to all the world! “The effect,” says a critic of the time, “was immense, and despite the detestation in which the monarch was held by a portion of his subjects, the pageant was nightly hailed with shouts of approval!”

Another masterpiece of stage-craft was the “sensation” scene in the drama, “The Cataract of the Ganges,” wherein real water was introduced in order to produce the full effect. It was not, however, until some years later, and under the management of Mr. J. H. Chute, that the theatre was supplied by the Water Company, but Mr. McCready was equal to the emergency, and engaged the fire-engines of the “Sun,” and, I think, the “Norwich Union” Insurance Offices to supply the torrent, up which Mrs. McCready was announced to ride on the back of a fiery steed.

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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McCready, besides being an actor of much ability, was moreover a playwright whose works found favour in the London as well as in the provincial theatres, some of the best known of these being "The Bank-note," "The Village Lawyer," and "The Irishman in Naples." In casting any play from the pen of the Immortal Bard he was scrupulously exacting, and my father has related as typical of our old lessee's method when casting such a work and interviewing a member of his company who was of more or less unknown ability, the following duologue :—

"Ye have played in Hamlet?"

"Yes, Mr. McCready. I have played Horatio, and on one occasion the Ghost, and I!—"

"Ye'll play Rosencrantz," and forthwith he made a note to that effect.

Throughout his residence in this city he had shown himself a God-fearing and religious man, for whilst at no time sanctioning the progress of work at the theatre on Sunday, he had himself been a regular attendant at the Cathedral services, and at the Cathedral were his remains interred on April 18th, 1829, he having passed away on the 11th instant, amidst manifestations of regret and sympathy on every hand.

By none, perhaps, were those sentiments more acutely felt than by his brother Freemasons, for his kindly, generous heart and charitable efforts were such as to be especially appreciated by them. So, indeed, they expressed it in the announcement of a benefit which they organized on behalf of the widow and children. The members of the Craft attended this in large numbers, and a goodly sum was realized for the object stated, and in further aid on the following week Mr. William Charles Macready appeared in the characters of "Virginius" and "William Tell," and again on May 22nd in "Damon and Pythias," with which the house was closed.

Until August 31st the Theatre Royal remained without a dramatic company, but on that date it was re-opened under the management of Mr. Richard Brunton, son of Mr. J. Brunton, an actor of some repute. With Mrs. McCready as his leading lady, he had engaged an excellent company also, and used all efforts to secure the assistance of "stars." His brief career as lessee, however, proved a failure, and with his company unpaid, as, indeed, so far as their just claims were concerned, had been the case for some time previously, came to an inglorious end.

With the earning power of the rank and file of a theatrical company of those days, it will readily be appreciated that much suffering ensued, whilst still more was looming in the near future; but that eminent tragedian, Mr. Charles Kemble, with his equally renowned daughter, Miss Fanny Kemble, being then engaged in Bristol, gave their services for a special benefit for the sufferers, a sum of £150 being thereby realized.

Next upon the scene of Bristol management came Mr. Bellamy, who for some years had held the lease of the Theatre Royal, Bath, and who,



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## *The Bristol Stage*

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by the efforts of "Their Majesty's servants" hoped to resuscitate the remunerative association of the two theatres. Financial results in Bath continued lamentable, and at the close of the spring campaign of 1833 the Theatre Royal, King Street, was again seeking a lessee.

The dramatic outlook of Bristol was, however, but little, if any, better than that of the sister city, and, although strongly urged to do so, Mrs. McCready hesitated considerably ere she consented to step into the breach.

**MRS. MCCREADY.**—Mrs. Sarah McCready was thirty-five years her late husband's junior, but was very far from being without stage experience, having indeed in her maiden name of Desmond, by reason of her dramatic interpretation of such striking characters as Meg Merrilees in Scott's "Guy Mannering," Helen McGregor in "Rob Roy," and Elizabeth in the same author's "Kenilworth," established an exceedingly enviable reputation in the North of England.

The responsibilities of manageress being once accepted, the new lessee gave evidence of that energy which had so emphasized her husband's management. On February 3rd, 1834, she opened her season with a performance of "Speed the Plough" and "The Haunted Inn," and shortly afterwards Braham, the famous vocalist, appeared in "The Beggars' Opera," contributing also his popular rendering of the "Death of Abercrombie."

At various times Mrs. McCready made considerable effort to emulate the spirit of spectacle shown earlier in "The Coronation," and as an Easter attraction staged a drama, entitled "The Jewess," in the chief scene of which, representing the entry of the Emperor Sigismund, some 200 persons appeared upon the stage. It became evident, though, that whilst Bristol possessed a theatre-loving community sufficient to appreciate a new production for a week or two, anything like a "reserve" to ensure a successful run was non-existent. But Mrs. McCready was a lady of resource, and all that was available in the way of entertainment and which offered a promise of success, she secured. Duerow's famous circus, the attractive troupe of Bedouin Arabs, each in turn found a place in the programme, whilst a series of promenade concerts and a fancy dress ball were amongst the innovations.

Wallack, the popular Shakespearean actor, of Drury Lane, paid a couple of visits during the initial season, being accompanied on the first occasion by Miss Phillips, and on the second by Miss Helen Faucit, whilst Mrs. McCready herself frequently took part in the performance.

It was during the autumn season of 1842 that Mr. James Henry Chute joined the Bristol company, the previous Eastertide having witnessed the production of a local pantomime entitled "Harlequin Hoddledy Gobbledy, or a legend of Cooke's Folly." During this year there were also visits from Mr. and Mrs. Charles Kean—Miss McCready appearing as Julia in

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## The Bristol Stage

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the "Hunchback"—from Wallack, the visit introducing both Mrs. and Miss McCready in the "Belle's Strategem," the before-mentioned attractions being closely followed by engagements of Mrs. FitzWilliam Buckstone, Macready, Mlle. Cerito and M. St. Leon, the famous dancers, Charles Braham and Miss Romer, James Anderson, Charles Matthews, Mrs. Nisbitts, Miss Fanny Kemble and numerous other of the London luminaries. Although Mr. Woulds, for many years lessee of the Bath Theatre Royal, in 1837 was in receipt of financial support from Macready, but that season alone showing a loss of a thousand pounds, the lessee was compelled in 1840 to give fickle fortune best, and renounce the venture. A couple of announcements in the possession of Mrs. Chute clearly indicate the position. The earliest of these refers to "the production on May 5th, 1840, of Rosini's Grand Opera *Seria*, the 'Maid of Pallassseau,' with Mr. Davidge in his original part of Philip, and with an otherwise excellent cast."

The second announcement bears date May 6th, 1840, and would suggest that Mr. Woulds had not slept easily upon the result of the last night's performance. I reproduce it:—

### THEATRE ROYAL, BATH

In consequence of the rapturous applause bestowed on Rosini's Grand Opera *Seria* the

#### MAID OF PALAISEAU

produced for the first time in the City of Bath, on

Tuesday, May 5th, by ELEVEN in the

Boxes! NINE in the Pit!! and twenty-eight in the  
GALLERY!! it will

be REPEATED on THURSDAY, MAY 7th, to give the

LOVERS OF MUSIC another opportunity  
of hearing the Composition of that *Great Master*.

Mr. Woulds became a bankrupt, and in the March of 1841 the theatre passed into the hands of Mr. Davidge, he retiring after little more than twelve months, broken both in health and pocket. Messrs. Newcombe and Bedford carried through the uncompleted season, but by then had likewise had enough, so gave way to Mr. Hay, at the close of whose tenure, to use a theatrical expression, "the ghost did *not* walk," and to quote Laertes in "Mignon," the manager, thought to be an honest man, proved to be a *non est* man!

A further effort was made by Mr. Hooper, but no successor to him could be found. It was at the episode of Mr. Woulds' bankruptcy that Mrs. McCready took her dramatic company, headed by Mr. Edwin Forrest, the famous American actor, to the Bath theatre for one night, and subsequently lent the company for a benefit there to Mr. Woulds, and twice

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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afterward for benefits to relieve the stranded actors. Undeterred by the past reverses within her knowledge, a five years' lease was signed, and in September, 1845, Mrs. McCready gave her first performance as lessee and manageress of the Theatres Royal, Bristol and Bath.

Whilst on the subject of the Bath theatre, I should wish to record that Mrs. McCready proved far from being indifferent to the position of her predecessor, for Woulds had joined the Bath stage as an actor in 1811, and might be thought to have been deserving of a happier fate than his fellow citizens had afforded him. A benefit in Bristol was arranged, and Miss Woulds engaged as a member of the theatre company, she so continuing up to 1857. At the outset of the new association, performances were given in Bristol on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, and in Bath on Tuesday, Friday and Saturday, but during later years, unless in the event of some exceptional engagement or local requirement, performances at Bath were confined to Saturday evenings.

An amusing episode of the reign of "Mrs. Mac." occurred during the visit of John Templeton—predecessor of Sims Reeves as star in ballad-opera—for whose benefit programme the opera "Masaniello" had been selected. The company being familiar with the work, a "run through" for orchestra and chorus during the afternoon of the performance was alone considered necessary, and it was not until the previous evening was the discovery made that the band parts were in Bath, where the opera had last been performed. Mine uncle (John Gover) and my father, both theatre enthusiasts, undertook to fetch the music.

Early in the morning my uncle, who lived in Small Street, secured a suitable conveyance, and drove to the junction of the Bath and Knowle roads, there to pick up my father, then resident in the latter district. So well had the nag performed its task that the arrival was a few minutes in front of the time arranged, so there was a brief respite or breathing interval, but so far from this proving acceptable to the gee-gee, from the moment of my father's quite moderate weight entering the scales, neither whip nor coaxing could extract from it other than a dignified walking pace.

Recognizing that under such conditions their mission was hopeless, at the "Lamb and Lark" inn at Keynsham they endeavoured to get another horse, but the stables there proved to be entirely empty. Still they learnt that a farmer, less than a mile distant and on the Bath road, would very probably be able to accommodate them, so, both having refreshed the inner man, they resumed their seats in the conveyance, and away went the horse, fresh as a four year old. The mystery was solved on the return to its stables, it being there disclosed that the horse had been doing funereal work, and after the pause to "pick up," proceeded circumspectly until it had again "set down!" after which it was, of course, a go-as-you-please.

The journey to Bath was accomplished in good time, the parts secured,



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## *The Bristol Stage*

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and on the strong recommendation of Mr. Loder, conductor at the Bath theatre, they took with them on the return journey a highly proficient chorus master.

"Now," said the expert at the "run through," "Masaniello will go down the stage, and we shall follow, but you don't budge an inch until I give you the lead, then watch me, and do exactly as I do."

So delighted was Mr. Templeton with his new chorus master that, by way of encouragement, he pressed a five-shilling piece into his hand, and that proved his undoing, for the Bathonian discovered "The Old Duke" tavern, where the famed home-brewed proved more potent than was the renowned mineral spring!

In the evening Masaniello, finding himself alone at the front of the stage, whilst his companion fishermen hung like bees about their leader, whom he saw clung desperately to a rock-piece set perilously near Vesuvius, which in a minute would be in eruption, varied the opening line of the second verse of "Behold how brightly breaks the morn," to suit the occasion, singing, up stage, "Come down, come down in front now," to which the choirmaster replied, musically, of course, "I'll see, I'll see you hanged first," or words to that effect!

The last and most enduring production by Mrs. Macready—as for some time the name had been written—was that of the earlier episodes related in Mrs. Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin," the original exponent of Uncle Tom being Mr. John Rouse.

Mrs. Macready's death occurred at Bath on March 9th, 1853, her remains being brought to Bristol and interred with those of her husband in the Cathedral.

Mr. Chute having virtually managed the Theatres Royal, but little change was noticeable upon his becoming lessee.

The concluding episodes of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," which, as a matter of fact had been fully rehearsed and announced for production prior to Mrs. Macready's death, was presented on March 9th, 1853, the title rôle being entrusted to Mr. M'Lein (Mr. MacNeil, subsequently of the Princess's Theatre, Edinburgh, but then a member of the Bristol company), Mr. George Melville being St. Clare; Mr. Blewitt (Mr. John Chute), Dan Haley; Legree, Mr. Peel; Cassy, Miss Tyree; Emmeline, Mrs. M'Lein; Ophelia, Miss Jackson; Mrs. St. Clare, Mrs. John Rouse; Topsy, Miss Aldridge; and Eva, Miss Clara St. Casse.

Mr. Chute took a benefit, appearing as Don Cæsar de Bazan, the theatre being then closed until September 13th. What happened during that considerable interval is best told in the re-opening announcement.

## CHAPTER IV

A.D. 1853

### *THEATRE ROYAL, BRISTOL.*

Lessee and Manager, Mr. James Henry Chute.  
Queen Square, Bristol, and Alfred Street, Bath.

It is respectfully announced that the above Establishment  
will OPEN for the season on

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 12TH, 1853

during the Recess the Theatre has been entirely RE-DECORATED  
the designs by Mr. J. S. Lenox,

Executed by Mr. J. S. Lenox, Mr. Henry Gilbert, and Mr. F. Thorne.

#### THE NEW ACT DROP

by Messrs. Grieve and Telbin, of the Gallery of Illustration.

#### THE SALOON, LOBBIES, BOXES, PASSAGES, etc.,

Painted, Papered and Ornamented by W. S. Edkins & Sons

#### THE ORNAMENTAL GILDING

by Mr. E. Harris, Clare Street.

The Gas Fittings and Plant throughout the building, Entirely New

#### THE STAGE

has been greatly extended and improved in order to increase the Scenic Effects  
and facilitate the Working of the Machinery.

#### THE COMPANY'S WATER

with Fire Mains has been laid on.

An improved method of VENTILATION has been introduced.

The Boxes are lined with a rich Crimson Flock paper.

The Seats newly covered, and the Resters covered with crimson velvet.

#### AMONG THE COMPANY

will be found the names of several OLD FAVOURITES, with many new Candidates for Public Favour.

#### THE BAND

will be under the direction of Mr. Salmon.

#### SCENIC ARTISTES

Messrs. J. S. Lenox, Mr. Gilbert and F. Thorne.

# The Bristol Stage

THE STAGE DECORATIONS AND PROPERTIES  
by Mr. Woodyer, of the Theatre Royal, Dublin.

THE MACHINERY  
by Mr. Harwell.

THE BOX OFFICE

For the accommodation and convenience of the Public will be at  
HOLESGROVE'S, BOOKSELLERS, DRAWBRIDGE

## Prices of Admission.

Lower Boxes .. .. .	Two and six
Upper Boxes .. .. .	One and six
Pit .. .. .	One shilling
Gallery .. .. .	Sixpence

Private Boxes, Ten and Sixpence and One Guinea.

On Monday and Tuesday, September 12th and 13th, will be  
Performed Sheridan Knowles's Tragic Play of

## THE WIFE, A Tale of Mantua.

Julian St. Pierre .. .. .	Mr. G. Melville
Leonardo Gonzazo {	Princes {
	of {
Ferrado Gonzazo {	Mantua {
	From the Theatre Royal, Dublin
	Mr. Verner
	From the Theatre Royal,
	Edinburgh

Antonio, the Curate—*Mr. Voltaire*  
From the Theatres Royal, Liverpool and Birmingham

Count Florida—*Mr. C. Webster*  
From the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh.

Lorenzo, An Advocate of Rome—*Mr. John Chute.*  
Bartolo—*Mr. Peel*

Mariana .. .. . *Miss Fanny Bennett*  
From the Theatre Royal, Plymouth

Floribel .. .. . *Miss Isabel Adams*  
From the Royal Olympic Theatre, London

After the Play on Monday evening

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN, by the Whole Company.  
To conclude with an apropos Extravaganza

## MR. CHUTE'S ASCENT OF MOUNT PERNASSUS!

The Illustrative Views have been painted from Original Sketches by the Artists of the Establishment who accompanied MR. CHUTE to the spot where they are exhibited. The Decorations by Mr. Woodyer. The Machinery by Mr. Harwell. The Music composed and arranged by Mr. Edward Fitzwilliam.

Sole Lessee and Manager.

Mr. Chute. His first appearance in that character. Mr. Chute



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## The Bristol Stage

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With some strengthening of the caste, no time was lost in again placing upon the boards the second part of "Uncle Tom," for, successful as had been the play dealing with the earlier episodes, that which introduced Miss Clara St. Casse—a wonderfully gifted child of ten years of age—created something of a *furor*. No actress, I should say, who ever graced the stage, came into her own more speedily than did this unaffected little lady. Mr. George Barker—composer of that famous ballad, "I am sitting on the stile, Mary," then on everybody's lips—wrote for Miss St. Casse Eva's dying song, "Oh! my dear father, pray calm thy brow," and this she sang with such simple pathos that not many dry eyes were to be found in the theatre at its termination. With George Melville at the death-bed as Eva's father, Miss C. Fife as Topsy, and John Vollaire as Uncle Tom, the scene lost nothing of its intensity in dramatic representation.

VOLLAIRE.—I wonder how many of to-day's theatre-goers remember John Vollaire! And yet he was an actor of rare ability, and one of the earliest of the Chute contributions to the London stage. It is not a great number of years ago that a local aspirant for high dramatic honours (but better versed in details of the auction mart) felt called upon to submit to the world his impersonation of Shakespeare's "Hamlet," and during the vacation of Sir Henry Irving secured the Lyceum for the purpose. "The new Hamlet" was duly boomed; panel photographs, in character, graced full many prominent windows. The *Daily Telegraph*, in its lengthy notice of the occasion, said that the production was justified in the opportunity it afforded of witnessing the splendid impersonation of Polonius by Mr. John Vollaire, an actor of whom we have seen too little in recent years. The remaining supporting members of the company received due acknowledgment, but the "star" was apparently forgotten! This is the only occasion of which I have any knowledge of "Hamlet" with the Prince of Denmark omitted!

The Theatre Royal orchestra, which for some years had been led by Mr. Henry Cooper, was now under the leadership of Mr. Thaddeus Wells, Mr. Cooper, who married a daughter of Mr. Richard Benson, tobacconist, Broad Street, leaving for Covent Garden, and subsequently for many years conducting the "Cooper Opera Company," which devoted its attentions to the North of England and Scotland.

After "Uncle Tom," which as a *pièce de résistance* served the management for upwards of thirty years, and more than twenty years after slavery in America (its *raison d'être*) had been abolished, there was presented another Chute stage version of a popular work, "It's Never too Late to Mend," being dramatised under the title of "Gold," Mr. Melville representing George Sandford and Miss Fanny Bennett Susan.

The engagement of Mr. Walter Montgomery and Miss Clinton gave Mr. Chute the strongest combination of tragedians within my memory—

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## The Bristol Stage

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Walter Montgomery, George Melville, Harcourt Bland, John Vollaire, Fanny Young, Fanny Bennett, and Miss Clinton, each, be it said, in their prime. There was next a single performance by an Italian Opera Company of "Des Huguenots."

MISS MARIE WILTON.—The "World of Flowers" was the title of the 1853-4 pantomime, Miss Fanny Young playing the leading part, whilst Miss Marie Wilton, as the Sprite of the Silver Star, made her first appearance and met with an instantaneous success. Long since as is the date of this production, I still have a mental vision of this delightful soubrette as the "Sprite," and can conjure up some lines which Miss Marie Wilton (Lady Bancroft) has probably long since forgotten :—

"How now my sprites, anything stirring?"

"Only you, Miss!"

"Oh! bother!"

"Well, you know you are always on some move or other."

"If I must confess the truth, be it so!"

I have a horror of what is called the slow:

Weary of the little progress here we're making,

A trip to Earth, this night, I think of taking."

A feature of the Theatre Royal in those "good old days" was in the designation of the O.P. side of the dress circle as the "Bachelors' box," and here it was that those claiming this condition of single blessedness elected to assemble in greater or smaller force to greet and applaud their favourites; they were a splendid audience. Generally some *sotto voce* pleasantries passed from box to stage, and I recollect one occasion upon which Miss Marie Wilton, in the Bavarian costume, then pretty much in evidence in our cities as they hawked their toy chip-brooms, sang an up-to-date song :—

"Buy of a wandering Bavarian a broom,  
Buy a broom!"

"How much?" inquired a young but well-known solicitor from this box.

Holding forth one of the little brooms in his direction, Miss Wilton replied instantly, "Six and eight-pence," a smartness of repartee which "brought down the house."

Whilst speaking of the bachelors' box, I will mention that on another occasion, when, in 1865, the Sisters Nelson, daughters of the composer, were playing an engagement here, and Carry Nelson had a taking kind of song in which the words of the last line were followed by a couple of bars of music, which she whistled, after two or three performances one of these "gents" forestalled her, whistling her part, however, quite satisfactorily. Taking it all quietly, Miss Nelson at the close secured a round

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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of applause by remarking, as though it were in her part, "You whistle so cleverly, it's my belief you are first cousin to the whistling thief"! the title of a then popular ditty.

On March 13th there was a striking production of "The Sea of Ice," an exciting drama.

G. V. Brooke and George Melville followed in Shakespearean plays, after which Mr. Chute gave "a benefit in aid of the funds for the relief of the wives and children of our soldiers." An appropriate drama, "The Soldier's Daughter," commenced the programme, after which Mr. George Melville spoke an "Address," written specially for the occasion by my father—Mr. G. F. Powell—this being followed by a new military ballet divertissement, arranged by Miss Fife.

The production of two new plays—one, "The Will and the Way," founded on a story written, if my memory serves, by that then everywhere popular novelist, Mr. J. F. Smith, and appearing in the *London Journal*; the other, "The Corsican Brothers," by Dion Boucicault—brought the spring season to the benefit era, and in quick succession those of Miss Marie Wilton, appearing as Jack Sheppard (a play afterwards prohibited by the Lord Chamberlain), on May 16th, John Vollaire, Mr. and Mrs. Rouse, Mr. and Mrs. Harcourt-Bland, Salmon (musical conductor), and Dobbins (treasurer), were given, and then, on May 22nd, Mr. Chute made his appeal, "Napoleon's Flower" being the opening item, Mr. Chute enacting the part of Martin Andre, whilst the second item was "Green Bushes," with Mrs. Chute as Miami, this being her last appearance on the stage.

The eminent comedian Mr. Wright played during the final week of the spring season "Paul Pry" and other works from his repertoire.

An extensive season of Shakespeare and the otherwise "legitimate" followed, Mr. Walter Shelley, Mr. George Melville and Mr. Walter Montgomery, with Miss Fanny Young and Miss Fanny Bennett, being allocated to the chief parts.

"Gulliver's Travels" formed the subject of the 1854-5 pantomime, the well-trained army of some seventy Lilliputs, under the command of Master Rouse, marching beneath Gulliver (Mr. Ellis), was mounted upon a couple of their sentry-boxes, legs astride, being a popular feature. In the harlequinade Delavanti was clown, Fosbrooke again pantaloone—a character he continued to represent for some period.

In the course of a highly humorous description of the preparation of this "New, Grand, Gorgeous, Chivalrous, Brobdingnagian and Lilliputian Comic Christmas Pantomime, abounding with astonishing hits, Embellished and Illustrated by Extraordinary Effects, Pourtraying the Manners and Customs of a by-gone age, in the production of which Months of Time and Oceans of Money have been expended," Mr. Chute added, "The Magnificent Scenery Real and Ideal, taken from Bird's Eye Views, mixed with real Turkish, which in order to have been of great magnitude,



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## The Bristol Stage

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has been painted with double size, by Mr. J. S. Lenox and Mr. F. Thorne."

Mr. Thaddeus Wells following in the footsteps of Henry Cooper in joining the Covent Garden orchestra, the King Street orchestra received Mr. F. Merry as *repetiteur* under the conductorship of Mr. Salmon, Mrs. Merry (Miss Powell), an accomplished *danseuse*, scoring considerably in subsequent pantomimes.

Hitherto it had been customary to receive and look for the visits of the leading comedians of the London stage, to be supported by the members of the resident company; now, however, the process was reversed, and on August 11th, the engagement being directed to the Lyceum theatre, it was with the "principal members" only, and quite irrespective of Madame Vestris and Mr. Charles Matthews.

During the following week came "twenty-seven members of Mr. Charles Kean's Royal Princess's theatre company"—but no Charles Kean!

A benefit in behalf of the funds of the Infirmary was given on September 11th, 1854, the "Poor Gentleman" being the chief item, and in this Mr. Chute, with my uncle, Mr. John Gover Powell, Mr. Walter Montgomery and Miss Fanny Young appeared; whilst the autumn season, which commenced immediately afterwards, presented Mr. Walter Shelley with Montgomery in the chief rôles, Mr. George Melville, who had been engaged for the season, replacing Mr. Shelley on October 2nd.

During the spring season of 1855 Miss Fanny Bennett appeared as "Hamlet," giving an excellent interpretation of the part of the young Dane and looking the character to the life.

It was at this time that the everywhere popular ditty, "Billy Barlow," was written, and it found a place in the bill for some time, Mr. Rouse being announced to "relate the history of William Barlow."

With the engagement of the celebrated actress, Miss Cushman, who during the course of her stay appeared as Romeo, the season was brought to a close.

The Dublin Opera Company, amongst the principals being Miss Lanza, Mr. Henry Haigh and Mr. Durand, assisted by Mr. Chute, who appeared as Devilshoof in Balfe's "The Bohemian Girl," were next upon the scene. They remained here seven weeks and produced, in addition to the well-known operas, Donizetti's "Love Spell," Rosini's "Cinderella," and Weber's "Der Freischütz," whilst for his annual benefit Mr. Chute availed himself of the combination, and billed Auber's "Fra Diavolo," in which he played Lord Allcash.

During Easter Mr. Charles Dillon presented "Belphegor," with Miss Marie Wilton as "Henri," the after attraction being Auber's "Masaniello," by the Dublin Opera Company.

Madame Celeste and Ben Webster then producing "Janet Pride," an excellent addition to their repertoire.

Miss C. Fife, who had become very popular by reason of her perform-

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## The Bristol Stage

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ance of Topsy in "Uncle Tom's Cabin," Oliver Twist and other characters, as well as by her graceful dancing, took a benefit, presenting Home's play of "Douglas," in which Mr. Daniel Williams appeared as Young Norval. Miss Fife afterwards became Mrs. Dan Williams (of Wills, Biggs & Williams, Victoria Street, and later resident at Bournemouth).

The famous Spanish dancers, Perea Nena, Marcot Diaz and others fulfilled a four nights' engagement, and closed the season.

On October 15th Mr. Chute produced an excellent spectacular piece, the "Fall of Sebastopol," this event being the topic of the day. The pantomime "Whittington and his Cat" introduced Miss Marie Wilton as the hero of the story, Signor Sylvani being the cat, whilst Mr. John Rouse was also in the cast.

Perhaps too much importance should not be attached to foreign names, such as "Signor Sylvani," who was cast for sprite, especially in the character of sprite or clown! But the public would have shied at an English one! "Mr. Dean!" mused Mr. Chute, on another occasion, "that will never do for clown," so forthwith he became "Herr Deani," and proved one of Bristol's best exponents of the character. Some time later, when engaged for an *al fresco* fête, the management had announced him as Mr. Dean. "That won't do for me," exclaimed the clever acrobat, "you got to call me by my name, Mr. Herr Deani!"

There followed the pantomime a succession of most approved exponents of Shakespearean characters, viz. Mr. and Mrs. Charles Pitts, Mr. Phelps, and Mr. James Anderson, with Miss Elsworthy, after which Miss Rebecca Isaacs, an accomplished *prima donna*, next made her first appearance here. During August "Picco"—the blind-born Sardinian minstrel, the sensation of the day—gave an afternoon performance at the Zoo, and an evening concert at the Theatre Royal.

Under the patronage of the Freemasons, Mr. W. H. Angel, an old, versatile and valued member of the Stock Company, took a benefit, "Don Cæsar de Bazan" being the attraction, with Mr. Chute in the title rôle, Mr. Angel, the Marquis, Miss Louisa Angel, Lazarilla, and Miss Marie Wilton, for the first time, Maritana. In August there was an important visit from London, Mr. Leigh Murray bringing his entire company, the which included Miss Jenny Marston. During the three weeks of their sojourn the company produced "Still Waters Run Deep," and the "Marble Heart," which plays proved the greater attractions. An Italian Opera Company, with Mesdames Grisi, Gassier, Bellonio, and Messieurs Mario and Albercine amongst the artistes, Signor Li Calsi being in the conductor's chair, being the most important engagement. "Il Barbiere" and "Lucrezia Borgia," with an act of "Sonambula," constituted the programme. In order to meet the exceptional expense of this venture, the pit was boarded over, the carpeted raised floor being fitted with stall-chairs, both circle and stalls being similarly priced 8s. 6d., and at the performances each seat was occupied.

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## The Bristol Stage

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On October 20th, 1856, Mr. Charles Matthews, accompanied by Miss Mason, commenced an engagement, being followed by Ben Webster and Madame Celeste. Madame Celeste became a frequent visitor to our boards for many years, and I think was as happy amidst her Bristol surroundings as at her London dramatic home, the Adelphi Theatre.

A Chute version of Mrs. Beecher Stowe's new work "Dred, a Tale of the Dismal Swamp," with George Melville in the title rôle, was produced with some success, but very far from that attending the dramatic version of her earlier work. The 1856 pantomime was "Jack and the Beanstalk"; and in this Miss E. Grattan (Mrs. Courtaine) played Jack, other characters falling to the lot of Miss Louisa Angel, Mr. and Mrs. John Rouse, Mr. D. Evans, and Mr. Henry Courtaine, whilst the harlequinade was supported by Herr Deani, clown; pantaloons, Mr. Fosbrooke; Harlequin, Mr. Duff; Columbine, Miss Woodyer; and Spirit of the cat, Miss Ida Wilton, a younger sister of Miss Marie Wilton.

Again under Masonic patronage, a benefit was given to Mr. W. H. Angel and Miss Louisa Angel, the latter reciting a Masonic address, written by Mr. G. F. Powell.

Mr. D. H. Jones appeared in a revival of "Dred," and then an English Opera Company during four weeks, well known vocalists in this combination being Miss Lucy Escott, Miss Lanza and Miss Dyer, with Messrs. Henry Haigh, Aynsley Cook and Charles Durand. Sir William Don, Bart.,—a very acceptable actor—played here for the first time, and was well received.

During the summer vacation, a Continental Ballet company, with Mlle. Marie and Signor Veroni, paid a short visit, whilst Mr. and Mrs. Howard Paul appeared for ten nights in August.

Again was there an excellent Italian Opera company, amongst the *artistes* appearing being Mlle. Piccolomini, Signors Benevanto, Belart, Belletti and Guiglini, "La Traviata" and "La Figlia del Regimento" being the operas selected; and upon their departure Mr. Leigh Murray again came to Bristol, bringing with him an exceedingly strong company, amongst others Messrs. Charles Vincent, W. H. Vernon and George Belmore, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Vincent (Miss Cleveland) being immediately engaged for the stock season. It was an excellent production of the play of "Faust and Marguerite" with which they opened their campaign.

There was a fortnight with T. C. King, a week with Sir William Don, Bart., and then yet another powerful Operatic company, headed by Madame Gassier and Mr. Sims Reeves, producing the operas of "The Bohemian Girl," "Don Giovanni," and Verdi's "Il Trovatore."

MR. GEORGE MELVILLE.—The popularity of Mr. George Melville, who followed, was by no means restricted to the stage, for any announcement of a Shakespearean reading at his hands brought together



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## *The Bristol Stage*

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an appreciative audience. It was for this reason, no doubt, that the Temperance party entered into an engagement with him to interlard their propaganda at the Broadmead Rooms, with some Shakespearean gems, the meat, as it were, between the drier portions of the sandwich. The customary place of meeting by this body was at the hall in Tailor's Court, but this was a special effort on a big scale, and the Broadmead Rooms at that time constituted the most extensive public hall in the city. There was a large audience, as many, or perhaps more, being desirous of listening to the actor as to the temperance orators. Upon the platform-table beside which sat the chairman and Mr. Melville, was a partially filled stoppered crystal water bottle, and glass. When Mr. Melville had been reading for some time, he quite unobtrusively removed the stopper and was proceeding to pour some of the crystal liquor into his glass, when the chairman, whether scenting a familiar odour or not, may not be said, seized upon the bottle and hugged it to his chest. Mr. Melville explained that it was impossible for him to get through the programme without some little stimulant, that he would have preferred stout, but not to offend susceptibilities, he had ordered a little gin to be added to the water. The chairman, however, was adamant, and hugged still closer the offending decanter. Mr. Melville shrugged his shoulders, and was about to quit the stage, when a voice from the body of the hall, and which was greeted with both hearty applause and laughter, was heard to exclaim, "drink the gin theeself, Melville, and hit him over the nose with the stopper."

## CHAPTER V

A.D. 1858

NOT all of the theatre company were able to secure reading engagements during the recess, and more than one effort had been made to indulge in a self-supporting holiday tour of the then theatreless resorts of the beautiful west. An effort to dramatically enlighten the inhabitants of several towns, more or less important, of the Southern Principality, energetically carried out by Mr. John Coleman and Mr. John Chute, from the Bristol and Bath theatres, inspired no desire, however, for a repeated venture on their part. With appropriate scenery, costumes and effects, Mr. John Coleman was prepared to enact them Shakespeare at his best, but Taffy proved anything but reasonably responsive, and so indifferently did the "Cr." column of the ledger compare with that on the opposite side of the volume, that the management was compelled to leave portions of their scenic accessories at some of the localities visited, in order to enable the members of the company to travel to their next town. Arrived (and thankfully) at the penultimate *locale*—Monmouth, I think it was—evidence was not wanting that here must they shed their last feather. So Mr. Coleman, making a virtue of necessity and taking the bull by the horns, awoke his final point of engagement, Newport, with the following announcement in prominent and arresting characters!

### NOTICE

In order that these great works may be presented to the gentry and others of the town of Newport, PRECISELY AS DESIGNED BY THE IMMORTAL SHAKESPEARE, the management desires to announce that the productions will be

ENTIRELY DENUDED OF SCENERY!!

Another brave venture, but of a less ponderous character than the combination of John Coleman and William Shakespeare, was made by some young actors, who selected a nearer pitch, in that land "Where the zidur apples grow." Looking between the curtains and appraising the audience present some quarter-of-an-hour after the time specified for commencing the programme, and counting four in one set of seats and two in another, the manager advanced to the front and addressed "the house." "Ladies and Gentlemen," he said, "it is with the deepest

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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regret that I have to announce that the entire company has been taken ill ; so there will be no performance. But if you will kindly apply at the box-office, near the entrance, your orders will be returned to you."

MISS MANDLEBERT.—The Christmas production of 1857 proved an unusually popular one, "Valentine and Orson" being the subject, Miss Mandlebert (always an admired leading lady) making a striking hero, and Mr. John Rouse a capital Orson. The representative of Bruina, the bear foster-mother of the latter, was Mr. Marchant. The forest set was very good, the centre of the stage being occupied by a bear-pit with climbing post, made familiar by that at the Zoological Gardens, of which it was a reproduction. When Valentine, armed with the magic sword and shield entered, the bear gave note, so for purposes of reconnoitre Valentine ascended an orange tree, and immediately upon Orson's appearance threw a sample of the fruit at his head.

ORSON. "Come drop that."

VALENTINE. "I can't drop that, but here's another."

ORSON (angry). "My name's Orson."

VALENTINE. "Is it? How's your mother?"

A little later mamma bear cries from the depth of her home, "Well, Orson, got anything to eat?"

ORSON. "A leg of Southdown."

BEAR. "What's that?"

ORSON. "Mutton."

BEAR. "Throw it down."

ORSON. "Come up for it, you glutton!"

Of the other characters in the pantomime Mr. D. Evans was King Pippin ; Henry, Mr. Lingard ; Colin Clump and Toby Trott, Mr. Wilson and Mr. T. Rogerson ; Hugo, Valentine's servant, Mr. Fosbrooke ; Princess, Miss Bella Cruise ; Agatha, her confidant, Miss Maria Cruise ; Fairy Queen, Miss Woodyer ; Dew Drop, Miss Maria Mandlebert ; Sport, Miss Alice Bullock ; Pastime, Miss Madge Robertson ; and Facolet, Miss Kate Bishop.

It was during the early days of this production that, owing to the carelessness of a stage hand, Mr. Fosbrooke, in carrying out a revolving chair act, had the misfortune to receive a fractured leg, and the harlequinade knew him no more, his place being taken for the remainder of the run by Mr. Douglas Grey. On this last occasion he had as companion pantomimists, Herr Deani as clown, Signor Wiling as harlequin, Miss Woodyer and Miss Maria Mandlebert, who appeared as Columbine and Harlequina respectively.

It was in connection with this pantomime that Miss Margaret (Madge) Robertson took her place in the salary sheet, being remunerated to the



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## *The Bristol Stage*

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extent of 1s. 6d. per night ; shortly afterwards Masters Fred Robertson, Fred Marshall and Miss Kate Bishop followed on similar terms, and later still, Alfred Bishop, one night 6d. Not great earnings it might appear for the Kate Bishop or Mrs. Kendal of the future, of Fred Marshall, or of Fred Craven Robertson of provincial "Caste" renown, but be it borne in mind that they were but tiny children, learning their valuable profession, and that their parents had not been called upon for "apprentice" fees. But salaries, as recorded in the archives of the Bristol theatre, are of a strikingly modest character throughout, and yet, having regard to the eagerness of all and sundry to become under the Chute management, there is no reason whatever to presume that they were less in Bristol than in any other provincial centre. Mr. Arthur Stirling's weekly salary was 70s. ; Mr. George Melville received 63s. ; Miss Fanny Bennett and Miss Adelaide Bowering, 60s. each ; Mr. Henry Sinclair, 40s. ; Mr. John Chute and William Rignold, 42s. ; George Rignold, 30s. ; Fosbrooke, 31s. 6d. ; Miss Mandlebert, 72s. ; Miss Marie Wilton, 35s. Of the joint salaries Mr. and Mrs. Charles Vincent (Miss Cleveland) were paid £5 10s. weekly ; Mr. and Mrs. John Rouse, £3 13s. 6d. ; whilst upon the occasion of Bath performances, the principal ladies were each paid 3s., and others of the Company 2s. 3d., from which they paid their fare, 1s. 11d. for the return journey, squandering the balance on a glass or two of ale, or "a cup of the beverage which cheers," etc., whilst awaiting the arrival of the midnight train to Bristol.

Of the scenic artists, Mr. Lennox received 55s. and a benefit ; Mr. William Gordon, 30s. ; Mr. George Gordon, 25s. ; Mr. Salmon, as conductor of the orchestra, was paid 42s., with a benefit ; the individual members, amongst whom were such well-known musicians as Thos. Glover, W. H. Poore, W. Maby, Uriah Richardson, John Pavay, etc., 24s. ; whilst the leader, Thaddeus Wells, received 31s. 6d., and his successor, J. O. Brooke, 25s. For the performances at Bath, Mr. Salmon usually took with him the leader and three other selected instrumentalists, who also received their 2s. 3d. each. In the days of Mrs. Macready, it occasionally created either amusement or consternation to find upon the assembly at Temple Meads railway station, that the "villagers" or other "extra" representatives who had done duty in Bristol, and who were really essential to the programme, were reduced in number from six or eight to two or four, the manageress having during the previous evening confidentially conveyed to the missing demoeselles, "you have a bad cold, my child, they can very easily do without you at Bath." Thus was many a one and six and three and three saved, for the devoted purpose of her godson's money-box.

Not until several years later was so important a specific salary as £5 per week paid to any individual member of the Stock Company, Miss Henrietta Hodson then being the recipient during the last season of her engagement at the theatre.

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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The clown touched that figure ! but he alone counted at theatre harvest's tide, and his features (?) alone graced the city walls. Names such as those of Miss Marie Wilton, Ellen Terry, Carlotta Addison or the Rignolds were announced much later than that of Herr, or Signor Clown, and found no place in the "star" bills of the day.

"Herr Deani" received as "stipend" £5 per week during the pantomime, half that sum during rehearsals, and a benefit. *The benefit!* it may be said, the clown's night always attracting an overflowing audience. Mr. Fosbrooke, Mr. Duff and others received an additional 10s. per week during their appearance in pantomime.

To arrive at any fair estimate of what annual income these figures might represent is by no means easy, if desirable, there being so many controlling conditions which it would be necessary to take into consideration. In the first place the theatrical career of the clown could only be regarded as of brief duration, whilst the year's dramatic seasons usually represented seven to eight months only of the twelve, theatrical terms—as recognized throughout the profession—being "no play, no pay." On the other side of the picture was the additional revenue derived from the annual benefit, conceded to practically all, and which, according to the popularity enjoyed, realized up to very substantial sums indeed. Nor was it that this opportunity of testing one's popularity was the privilege of the more prominent actors or actresses only, for those of a less exalted sphere had their "ticket nights" whereon every ticket sold by themselves or well-wishers, and presented for admission to the performance entitled the *beneficiare* to fifty per cent. of its face value, whilst tickets so purchased and not used, of which there were on occasions not a few, enabled him, or her, to justly retain the entire sum.

Salaries were not, however, indicative of merit, or favouritism, as were benefit results, for like the industrial workers of the present day, stage exponents had their especial lines of business, in the execution of which, those of the one branch were as efficient as those in another, and even—to again employ an up-to-date analogy—as the pattern-maker, turner, or fitter may be in receipt of varying remuneration for his labour, on a recognized scale, so the parts specified in the actor's engagement would suggest the relative nature of his salary. There were the juvenile head, first and second light, and also low comedians, old men and character-actors, walking gentlemen, and so on, with corresponding character representatives on the ladies' side, and these definitions still obtain—save that the old woman and the chambermaid of the past have become the dame and the soubrette of to-day.

There were also, of course, the "star," the manager, and the "first robber," *i.e.* the money taker, but the two last important rôles were generally in one hand, and anyhow were irrespective of the actors' salary list.

Of the sublime total the before-mentioned method assumed in any

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## The Bristol Stage

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single instance, I am profoundly ignorant, but this I can, by reason of the many and enduring friendships which from time to time I formed, affirm, that a more contented community than that associated with the Bristol stage, or one more highly esteemed by those with whom they were brought into association, was not easy of discovery. That the little children "stuck to the ship" would seem to claim as much, whilst the histrionic aptitude, to be attributed to both heredity and early culture, has spoken loudly in the succeeding generations. Take the remarkable records of the Terry family—although not associated with Bristol until a little later; of the Bishops, Mrs. Bishop herself being an excellent actress, both her son Alfred and daughter Kate earning enviable reputations; whilst Miss Mary Löhr, daughter of the last named, is now on the pinnacle whereon Miss Ellen Terry stood! Then again the Robertson family, of whom the mother had proved herself a scholarly exponent of Shakespeare's dames for many years. The eldest son, Tom Robertson, was author of those famous plays, "Caste," "School," "David Garrick," and many others; Miss Fanny Robertson and Miss Brunton became rare provincial favourites in their brother's plays, as did Fred Craven Robertson, by whom they were toured for years; and last, although the senior of her brother Fred, was Madge—Mrs. Kendal—one of the most distinguished actresses of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Mr. Chute used to speak of his old manager as having also been a good actor. I remember him, however, at the close of his long career. He was cast for "the fiery Tybalt," but "funking" the fall upon receipt of his *quietus*, he slid to a sitting position, and then leant back, prone upon the stage!

The seasons 1858 and 1859 disclosed an exceedingly powerful "all-round" company, and less resort to extraneous aid was very marked. Such visits as were in evidence had shown the "stars," as compelled, either by an increase of *personnel*, or the inclusion of new works in threadbare repertoire, in order to increase their powers of attraction. Of the resident actors of A.D. 1858-9 it is only necessary to mention such names as those of Misses Cleveland, Mandlebert, Adelaide Bowering, Emily Thorne, Mrs. Robertson, Holston and Bishop, together with Messrs. Arthur Stirling, Charles Vincent, Arthur Wood, William and George Rignold, J. B. Steele, Holston, Henry Farrell, Fosbrooke and David Evans. Mr. Ben Webster and Madame Celeste came in February, but they brought with them Messrs. Wright and Paul Bedford, the two most popular comedians of the period, and produced "The Poor Strollers," as "commanded" by Her Majesty the Queen and the Prince Consort, during the previous week, whilst with the two comedians as Grinnidge and Jack Gong, in the "Green Bushes," this engagement secured new life for that exciting drama.

Then Sir William Don, Bart., accompanied by Lady Don, introduced two new items, "The Evil Genius," and the Farce "The Tragedy of the







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## *The Bristol Stage*

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Seven Dials," whilst Mr. and Mrs. Henry Haigh revived, after many years, the musical Play "The Devil's Bridge," and Miss Vadenhoff was seen in a new Play, "Woman's Heart." Otherwise the local company completed the spring programme, a new (and duly licensed) version of "Jack Sheppard" the idle apprentice, being personated by Miss Mandlebert, bringing it to a close.

In the autumn Miss Marie Wilton delighted all as Cupid in the new extravaganza "Atalanta," following as Nan in "Good for Nothing," and for her benefit and last appearance, producing here "The Little Devil."

On September 22nd Miss Kate Mandlebert (afterwards Mrs. George R. Chapman), and a younger sister of Miss Mandlebert, made her appearance, playing Albert, of apple renown, his father, "William Tell," being represented by Mr. George Melville, whilst a fortnight or three weeks later, another of the coming *artistes*, Miss Madge Robertson, was cast for the part of Eva in "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

A splendid production of "Midsummer Night's Dream," for which the services of Mr. Wm. Gordon (scenic artist of Charles Kean's production at the Princess's) had been secured to supplement his already strong staff of artists, followed, and then a striking drama, "Jessie Brown," dealing with the Relief of Lucknow, attracted large audiences.

MISS CLEVELAND.—Miss Cleveland had by this time become an enormous favourite, her popularity being considerably enhanced by a capital extravaganza "Conrad and Medora," in which, with Miss Mandlebert as Medora, she made a great hit as the corsair, following this success by undertaking the part of Romeo.

For the Christmas pantomime, 1858-9, "The Babes in the Wood," the company engaged in the opening story were, for the first time, elevated to a fellow distinction with the clown, etc., by their names appearing in the announce advertisements, an innovation which "had come to stay."

On June 30th and July 1st "that justly distinguished eccentric comedian and comic singer," Mr. Sam Cowell, gave concerts, being supported by the Misses Henry, and Master Haydn Corri. At this period in the world's history, Sam Cowell was all the rage.

Another important engagement of Italian Opera artistes inaugurated the autumn season of 1859, amongst the vocalists being Mlle. Titiens, Madame Borchardi and Mlles. Vaneri and Dellanese; Signors Badiali, Vialletti, Borchardt, Corsi, Castelli and that famous tenor, Signor Giuglini! The conductor was Signor Arditti, all hailing from Her Majesty's Theatre. Their stay was for the customary two nights only, September 19th and 20th, and on the Monday "Il Trovatore" was the attraction, that of the following evening being Donizetti's powerful opera "Lucrezia Borgia."



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## *The Bristol Stage*

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It did not occur at Bristol, but it was an incident of the further journeying of this operatic galaxy, so perhaps I may relate it. It was at Dublin, and Signor Guiglini, possibly from the effects of *mal-de-mer*, was indisposed, Signor Corsi being his substitute in "Il Trovatore," the opera with which the engagement opened. The house was full, and the gallery, with price raised from sixpence to a shilling, overflowed with Dublin bhoys, the most appreciative audience of opera in the British Isles! Manrico had barely delivered the concluding stanza of his first number, sung previous to his appearance, when a voice from the gods, betokening much inward pain, was heard to exclaim, "Oh! me extra sixpence."

Amongst the principals available at the outset of the autumn season, I remember Misses Adelaide Bowering, Mandlebert, Emily Thorne, and Emily Wood, together with Messrs. Arthur Stirling, William Rignold, J. B. Steele, Arthur Wood and Holston. A capital *apropos* farce, the "Rifle Volunteers," in which Miss Emily Thorne "raised" and drilled twenty-eight ladies, all being in correct rifle volunteer attire and with rifles, proved a huge success, and on November 23rd the performance was under the patronage of the Lt.-Col., officers and members of the Bristol Volunteer Rifle Corps, the programme consisting of "Midsummer Night's Dream," a patriotic address from the pen of Mr. G. F. Powell and delivered by Mr. Arthur Stirling, and the farce the "Rifle Volunteers." So well did the female contingent carry out their platoon drill, that they were encored, Miss Emily Thorne being recalled again and again.

MR. WILLIAM RIGNOLD.—The pantomime 1859-60 was "Red Riding Hood," Miss Powell (Mrs. Merry) as the heroine and William Rignold the wolf. Rignold was an accomplished violinist, and in this production played a solo on the stage. To introduce this he was provided with the following lines, addressed to Red Riding Hood:—

"You *Won't* Dance?

You shall, by Jupiter Ammon!

For know that I play like unto the far-famed Salmon!"

But they pleased him not! So on the occasion of the initial performance he gradually ran down the gamut until the "Salmon" was in the vasty deep, and inaudible.

This pleased not the conductor, who drew the gov'nor's attention thereto.

The following night the process was reversed, and the "Salmon" came from the clouds in a perfect yell. The audience, previously amused, was now greatly tickled. Further remonstrance and the third attempt was, from start to finish, in monotone not varying a hair's breadth. "Better cut it out, William," said Mr. Chute, and out it went!

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## The Bristol Stage

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The secret of the situation was that Salmon's fiddle-scraping was never enjoyable to either the house or company, and Rignold's violin solo pleased both.

Throughout the season 1860 the Stock Company was in yet increasing evidence, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Matthews, Ben Webster with Miss Woolgar in "The Dead Heart," and Mr. and Mrs. Charles Kean and company, being the only outside engagements of the spring. During the recess a grand opera company with Madl. Rudersdorff, and Messrs. St. Alwyn and Elliot Galer, paid a visit, the conductor being Sig. Randagger, and a taking local production, "Gizelle—the Phantom Night-Dancers," proved the *pièce de résistance* during the autumn. "Puss in Boots" was the 1860-1 pantomime, Miss Kate Mandlebert being Puss, and executing an attractive *pas de seul* in top-boots, the Baron being in the capable hands of Mr. George Rignold.

The production of Dion Boucicault's famous drama the "Colleen Bawn" inaugurated the theatrical season of 1861, Miss Cleveland filling the title rôle, her husband, Mr. Charles Vincent, giving a powerful interpretation of Danny Mann, and Mr. Arthur Wood proving a capital Miles-na-Coppaleen. At a revival of this epoch-making drama, in 1862, as a surprise packet, Miss Marie Cruise played Eily O'Connor. Miss Cruise was a niece of Michael Balfe, the Hibernian and famous composer of "Bohemian Girl," "Puritan's Daughter," etc., and, as already indicated, she had been for several seasons a member of the Bristol Company, but except when singing, her delivery spoke as emphatically of the sister Isle, as—well, as did the Dublin jaunting-car. "Will I spake with a brogue, Mr. Chute?" she inquired when the part was entrusted to her. "Speak just as you usually do, my dear," was Mr. Chute's reply, the cryptic nature of which greatly tickled the other members of the company then upon the stage.

Mr. Vollaire was Father Tom; Mr. William Rignold, Hardress Cregan; and Mr. David Evans, Mr. Corrigan. The Drama, the first of the "sensational" school, was finely produced, the new scenery being painted by Mr. George Gordon.

After a fortnight of postponement owing to the illness of Miss Louisa Pyne, the famous Pyne and Harrison Opera Company, from Covent Garden, made a welcome appearance here, staging Balfe's "The Rose of Castille," Vincent Wallace's "Lurline," and "Maritana," Auber's "Crown Diamonds," and the first named's "Satanella." Mr. Alfred Mellon was conductor, and amongst the operatic company were Misses Thirlwall, Leffler and Wood, and Messrs. Henry Wharton, Henry Corri, St. Albyn, George Honey and Charles Lyall; these in addition, of course, to Miss Louisa Pyne and Mr. William Harrison.

An apropos sketch, "The Census," followed. An unusually strong combination, consisting of Mr. George Melville and Miss Heath, Mr. J. G. Shore, Mr. McLein, Mr. R. Cathcart, Mr. J. Clarke and others,

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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appeared in "The Lady of Lyons," "Corsican Brothers," and "Romeo and Juliet," were each billed, whilst Johnnie Clarke delighted all by appearing in his original characters in "The Bonny Fishwife" and "Vandyke Brown"; the fortnight's engagement concluding with "Ruy Blas."

Mr. and Mrs. F. B. Conway, American artistes, brought with them a new play, by Westland Marston, entitled "Ann Blake," and an American piece "Romance of a Poor Young Man," the other items produced being of the stereotyped order.

The "Colleen Bawn" was again to the fore, but with a considerably varied cast, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Vincent (Miss Cleveland) having left the company in May.

HENRIETTA HODSON.—On October 7th, 1861, Mr. Chute produced H. J. Byron's burlesque "Aladdin," and it was in this that Miss Henrietta Hodson, in the title rôle, made her instantaneous success. Mr. Arthur Wood also scored considerably as The Widow Twankey.

Madame Grisi, taking her farewell—and vocally, none too early—appeared on October 15th in "Don Giovanni," and 18th in "Norma," the dramatic company continuing "Aladdin" on the off nights, after which Mr. James Anderson played an engagement of four nights, Miss Amy Sedgwick, the popular actress, following with the latest Haymarket success, "An Unequal Match," "The Love Chase," and producing a new play, "A Charming Woman."

A special production, with new scenery by Mr. George Gordon—Mr. J. S. Lenox, the veteran, having retired to the quietude of Hastings, where for several years he lived to enjoy the southern breezes of that delightful town—was the "Angel of Midnight," Miss Margaret Eburne enacted the chief character, in the somewhat weird play, which kept the bill for some time, being supported either by "Aladdin" or "Colleen Bawn."

Lt.-Col. Bush, officers and members of the City of Bristol Rifle Volunteers, of which Mr. J. H. Chute was a member, gave a bespeak on November 29th, "The Honeymoon" and "Aladdin" being the dramatic fare, and the band of the regiment playing selections of music.

Some powerful (!) plays followed this, notably "The Idiot of the Mountains," "The Terrible Secret," and Mr. John Coleman with "Catherine Howard," but "Aladdin," which followed each evening, sent the audiences away happy—and let us hope, undisturbed by nightmare!

MR. GEORGE RIGNOLD.—On Christmas Eve was presented the 1861-2 pantomime, "Jack the Giant Killer," Mr. H. J. Byron's Fairy burlesque being provided with the requisite harlequinade tail. Miss Henrietta Hodson was Jack, whilst Mr. George Rignold represented the Giant Gorgibuster; Mr. Persivani was Clown, Mr. Doughty, the famous Bristol clown, with his dogs, "Clown on his travels."



## CHAPTER VI

A.D. 1862

THE success of the "Colleen Bawn," a drama of homely Irish romance, pointed to a welcome for its companion play, "Peep o' Day," by Edmund Falconer, who had been the original Danny Mann in the "Colleen Bawn" at the Adelphi, but, grasping his opportunity, wrote "Peep o' Day," and resigning his engagement, took the Lyceum Theatre, where he set out to compete with Boucicault in the race for popularity. On March 24th the drama was staged in admirable style at the Theatre Royal, and excepting a week with Mr. and Mrs. Charles Kean, occupied the bill to the season's end, May 14th.

A burlesque of the "Colleen Bawn," written in the most delightful spirit of banter, by H. J. Byron, proved a real attraction. Everybody who had seen the drama felt constrained to see "Miss Eily O'Connor," as the humorous item was called. Miss Henrietta Hodson as the Miles, William Rignold, Danny Mann, and Arthur Wood, Eily O'Connor; rare promise of rattling gaiety, as all then recognized.

Mr. George Rignold next appeared as Varney in "Tale of Two Cities," and then Mr. William Rignold took his first benefit, the play being "Writing on the Wall," but he concluded with a musical novelty of his own, "The Alabama Minstrels." Sitting à la Christy's, there were: tambourine, Mr. Adams; theatre prompter, second violin, Mr. George Rignold; tenor, Mr. Andrews; first violin (centre), Mr. William Rignold; guitar, Mr. Wood; concertina, Mr. Trafford; bones, Mr. Grey. The huge joke was applauded to the echo.

On April 18th a special performance, arranged by a committee of gentlemen, with admission prices doubled, was given "as a token of sympathy with Mr. Chute, on account of the heavy loss sustained by him owing to the destruction of the Theatre Royal, Bath," Morton's fine old English comedy, "Speed the Plough," was presented, Mr. G. F. Powell again appearing as Farmer Ashfield, Sir Abel Handy, by Mr. H. Layard; Sir Philip Blandford, Mr. George Rignold; Evergreen, Mr. Vernon; Susan Ashfield, Miss Henrietta Hodson; Lady Handy, Miss E. Burton; Miss Blandford, Miss A. Collier; Dame Ashfield, Mrs. Robertson.

A comic song, "The Great Sensation," followed, the exponent, Mr. Langley, otherwise Mr. Arthur Walkley (father, I understand, of "Mons. Walkley," *The Times* critic), and an address by Mr. J. W. Thorne; the

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## The Bristol Stage

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concluding item being Charles Selby's farce, "Peggy Green," performed by the theatre company.

MISS KATE TERRY, etc.—The theatre having undergone some re-decoration, was opened for a few nights during August with a company of exceptional power, as the following names will indicate : Misses KATE TERRY, MADGE ROBERTSON, ADA DYAS and Sarah Stirling, Mrs. Robertson, and Messrs. ARTHUR STIRLING, St. Albyn, Tilbury, David Evans, Eugene O'Reilly, CHARLES VINCENT, J. Robins, DAVID JAMES, FOSBROOKE, etc., of whom, whilst Miss Ada Dyas and Mr. David James were making their first appearance in Bristol, Mr. Arthur Stirling, Charles Vincent, David Evans and Fosbrooke had been absent from the local boards for two years. "Extremes," and "Friends or Foes" were the novelties included in the repertoire.

CHARLES COGHLAN.—The autumn season of 1862 opened on September 15th with the "Muleteer of Toledo," followed by a rattling farce, "The Colleen Bawn settled at last by Lord Dundreary," in which Mr. Charles Coghlan appeared as Hardress, Arthur Wood as Lord Dundreary, Mr. Andrews as Miles, and Miss Henrietta Hodson as Mrs. Hardress Cregan, *née* the Colleen Bawn. The performance concluded with the extravaganza "Endymion," with Miss Henrietta Hodson, Kate Terry, Louisa Thorne and Madge Robertson, Messrs. Arthur Wood, George Rignold, and H. Andrews in the cast ; patrons could hardly complain as to their money's worth !

In the middle of November the *corps dramatique* was further strengthened by the inclusion of Miss Ellen Terry, who appeared with them in the extravaganza "Perseus and Andromeda," the sisters Kate and Ellen Terry, at the close of the month, taking a joint benefit. "Friends or Foes" was the staple food, "Conrad and Medora," with Miss Henrietta Hodson as Conrad.

MISS ELLEN TERRY.—Miss Kate Terry, Medora ; Miss Ellen Terry, Serena ; and Miss Madge Robertson, Démetrius, followed by "Home for the Holidays" disclosed Miss Ellen Terry as Hector Melrose, and Miss Kate Terry as his sister, and also as "Mrs. Terrorbody, an assumption," these being the only characters in the little play. The Terry engagement then came to an end, but Miss Cleveland rejoined the company, accompanied by Mr. J. R. Anderson. Looking at the foregoing names in the light of later days, it is difficult to suggest a combination of greater histrionic talent.

This brings my story down to the close of 1862, when at Christmas "Cinderella" introduced Miss Madge Robertson for the first time in a leading pantomime part. She was discovered seated, encouraging the baronial kitchen fire with the aid of the bellows, whilst singing :

"Polly, put the kettle on,  
And we'll all have tea !"

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## The Bristol Stage

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The Prince was Miss Henrietta Hodson ; the Baron, Mr. George Rignold ; whilst Messrs. Andrews and Arthur Wood impersonated the elder sisters.

The popularity of Miss Powell (the Red Riding Hood of 1860, and who now appeared as Columbine) afforded a great tribute to the *bonhomie* still existent in Bristol dramatic circles, for Miss Henrietta Hodson supported the harlequinade *à la Watteau*, Mr. Arthur Wood as columbine, George Yates as pantaloon, and Charles Adams as clown.

The popular comedian, Mr. George Hodson—father of Miss Henrietta Hodson—was here for three nights.

The attraction for Easter proved of an exceptionally holiday character, the “Fairy Fountain,” so great an attraction at the Alhambra, London, being seen in Bristol for the first time.

On Thursday evening the performance took the form of a Masonic Bespeak, the Rt. Wor. Provincial Grand Master, Bro. Henry Shute, the officers and brethren of the Bristol Province attending clothed in the Masonic regalia, and moreover, in goodly number.

Benefits now came fast, Mr. Arthur Wood introducing an extravaganza of quasi-local interest, “Ye true hysterie of ye Prince Bladud, and ye lyttel Pygges of Keynsham.”

Quite a galaxy of talent presented itself to the Bristol public during the otherwise recognized recess, the greatest contemporary *tragedienne*, Madame Ristori, supported by an entire company of Italian *artistes*, opening on July 22nd in “Medea,” and receiving most generous support. Some years later, when the Theatre Royal had passed into other hands, and Madame Ristori into ill-judging direction, the popularity of the engagement of 1863 induced the latter to demand prohibitive terms from the Park Row management, the alternative they threatened being, Ristori at King Street ! Park Row accepted this alternative, and Madame Ristori performed at the Theatre Royal to practically empty benches, the receipts on one night, or so her agent informed me, being little more than £3 !

Mr. George Melville placed upon the boards a drama which at the time was being played to enormous business at the Lyceum, under the title of “The Duke’s Motto,” London seeing Miss Kate Terry and Mr. Fechter in the parts of Blanche de Nevers and Henri de Lagardere.

A grand combination of actors from the St. James’s, including Misses Herbert, Ada Dyas, Patti Josephs and Mrs. Frank Matthews, together with Messrs. Arthur Stirling, Frank Matthews, Gaston Murray and others, appeared in “The Merry Widow,” “Lady Audley’s Secret,” Lenester Buckingham’s play, “A Dark Cloud.” September weather notwithstanding, the audiences continued large and enthusiastic throughout.

The autumn season opened with Tom Taylor’s fine drama “The Ticket o’ Leave Man,” and pray note the cast. Bob Brierley, Mr. William Rignold ; May Edwards, Miss Kate Terry ; Green Jones, Mr. Charles Coghlan ; Hankshaw, Mr. George Rignold ; Jim Dalton, Mr. Fosbrooke ;



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## The Bristol Stage

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Sam Willoughby, Miss Henrietta Hodson ; and Mrs. Robertson as Mrs. Willoughby. A grand combination of dramatic talent, beyond all question.

Revivals, and especially of the more popular of the extravaganzas, continued to be a considerable feature of the season, but there were notable productions also, amongst the earliest of these being "Kenilworth," by Andrew Halliday and Frederick Lawrence. Miss Henrietta Hodson was Earl of Leicester ; Miss Ellen Terry, Amy Robsart ; Sir Walter Raleigh, Miss Madge Robertson ; Tresillian, Miss Marion Jones ; with Misses Kate Bishop and Maria Cruise, Messrs. George Rignold, Douglas Grey, Fosbrooke, etc., also in the cast. Miss Ellen Terry was now a member of Mr. J. B. Buckstone's Haymarket company, and appeared here by his permission.

Mr. Sothern in "Lord Dundreary" was here for four nights. Mr. Sothern's stage appearance in this popular character, with his long "drag-down" whiskers as they were then called, was as familiar, and as generally approved by playgoers, as is that at the Horse Guards to a Whitehall crowd. Mr. George Augustus Sala, the famous critic, however, took exception to the judgment which dictated it, by giving the statement that whilst the English swell was as a rule tawny, "Mr. Sothern's make-up is so dark as to be almost Jewish, and no Jew could ever look a gentleman." Perhaps this was all the satisfaction that he could recover from the tribe.

Four nights with Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Wigan in "A Scrap of Paper" proved most popular, after which there was a staging of the St. James's sensational "Isle of St. Tropez," Miss Marion Jones and Mr. William Rignold in the Wigans' parts. Miss Charlotte Saunders followed !

Both Mr. Charles Coghlan and Mr. George Rignold being engaged by a London management, a joint complimentary benefit was accorded them on December 18th, 1863, the chief item of the programme was "Aurora Floyd," in which Mr. George Rignold repeated his terribly intense performance of the Softy ; a "Wonderful Woman," in which Miss Louisa Thorne, who had come from the Strand Theatre to support Mr. Coghlan, played the Marquis, and Mr. George Rignold, Crepin, followed ; and the farce, "To Parents and Guardians," formed the concluding item.

The pantomime of 1863-4, "The House that Jack Built for Little Goody Two-Shoes," was one of the most successful of the elder Chute's productions. Miss Henrietta Hodson—who in the course of the evening sang "Holly Ho," composed by W. F. Taylor, a fellow-citizen, and "The Minstrel Bird," composed for her by myself—was a delightful Jack, whilst Miss Madge Robertson was most winsome in the character of Goody Two-Shoes. "Freddie Marshall" played a dog ; Mr. Persivani was clown ; columbine, Miss Powell.

Just previous to the production a local architect, who above the *nom de plume* "Jottings" had for some time forwarded to a local newspaper finicking and carping criticisms of Shakespearean and other historic pro-

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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ductions here, had made a serious architectural error in the design of an important commercial building (now Andersons', Stokes Croft) for the execution of which he was responsible, Mr. Chute contemplated, and that seriously, introducing into his pantomime a comic scene representing this erection, showing the faulty crack, which was, alas ! only too visible, and adorning it with the legend "This is the house that 'Jottings' built !" The architect, however, heard a whisper of this, and begging Mr. Chute to forgo such a damaging retaliation, undertook "to never write a line concerning the theatre again." Mr. Chute—although somewhat reluctantly—accepted the compromise.

The incident was not readily forgotten, however, on one hand at any rate, for a couple of years subsequently, when submitting to Mr. Chute some items concerning which I had undertaken to give thought, I unfortunately commenced by saying, "I have made a few jottings——" "Oh ! dear no ! I *hope* not," he interposed. I tried back !

The first productions of the year 1864 were a sensational drama, "The Trail of Sin," and Burnand's little burlesque, "Patient Penelope." Burnand's famous burlesque of "Ixion" was the following item, and kept its place through the succeeding fortnight's appearances of Mr. James Bennett and also through that of Mr. and Mrs. Herman Vezin, who succeeded him.

On March 16th the Bristol Histrionic Club gave an amateur performance of unusual interest, the occasion being a complimentary night to Mr. Chute. The "Honeymoon" was the first item of the programme, the Duke Aranza being entrusted to Mr. J. W. Thorne, an accomplished amateur ; Lopez was performed by Mr. Irwin—father of Mr. Haviland, of the Lyceum ; Padua, Mr. Rexworthy—afterwards known as Mr. George Temple, of the Savoy Operas ; Jaquez, Mr. H. G. Davies.

Mr. S. Miles, tenor, gave a song, and the *pièce de résistance* "Bardell v. Pickwick" followed. Pickwick was impersonated by Mr. J. H. Clifton, a solicitor, as widely known probably, and as greatly popular, as was any citizen in our midst. Buzfuz was in the hands of Mr. Austin, also a familiar figure to most Bristolians, and for a long number of years *The Times* correspondent. Skimpkin was impersonated by Mr. Handcock, an official of the Bankruptcy Court ; Mrs. Cluppins by Mr. H. C. Davies, popular amongst advertisers generally ; Winkle by Mr. Walter Grogan, chief reporter on the *Bristol Mercury*, and with his brother Mr. Michael Grogan, of the *Western Daily Press* commercial staff, subsequently joint proprietors of the *Torquay Times*. Sam Weller, Mr. Yetts (Ottey), Old Weller, Mr. Frank Hill, chief accountant, *Bristol Mercury* ; and Foreman of the Jury, Mr. White. Besides being a cast of real histrionic ability, the personality of the performers was calculated to produce a "bumper" house.

## CHAPTER VII

A.D. 1864

MISS HENRIETTA HODSON—who must assuredly be characterized as the most popular *comedienne* with Bristol audiences during many years—in view of her approaching marriage to Mr. Richard Pigeon, a local solicitor—now resigned her position in the company. Upon the occasion of her benefit, on April 12th, 1864, she had appeared as Helen in the “Hunchback,” together with Mr. and Mrs. Herman Vezin, and again on the 23rd as Mrs. Ford in the “Merry Wives of Windsor,” Ford being represented by Mr. James Bennett, and Falstaff by Mr. Chute. Her last appearance as a member of the Bristol *corps dramatique* was on the following April 26th, and in the character which she had made so popular here, “Ixion, the Man at the Wheel.” Miss Hodson then elected to retire into private life, but subsequently emerged in order to assist at a couple of benefit performances, and still later to inaugurate her highly successful career in London. On the death of Mr Pigeon, she became the wife of Mr. Henry Labouchere, M.P.

On April 26th, in order to commemorate the three hundredth birthday of Shakespeare, there was an admirably arranged programme of condensed versions of “As You Like It,” “Merry Wives of Windsor,” and “Midsummer Night’s Dream,” the performance concluding with an *apropos* serio-comic sketch, entitled “Shakespeare at Home.”

During May Mr. W. H. Swanborough, of the Royal Strand Theatre, came for a brief season, accompanied by that delightful burlesque actress, Miss Julia St. George, there being also in the company Miss Minnie Davis, Miss Amy Conquest and Messrs. George Stretton, Lupino, Farrell and Hudspeth. “Orpheus and Eurydice,” and H. J. Byron’s burlesque “Ali Baba and the Thirty-nine Thieves,” in accordance with the author’s habit of “taking one off,” were the chief attractions, each proving highly popular.

Mr. Charles Rice was here for the Royal Agricultural Society’s week on Durdham Downs, June, 1864, and presented his play, “The Stricken Oak,” in which he had most cleverly availed himself of Professor Pepper’s recent luminous “Ghost invention—and sensation”!

The Theatre Royal being then closed, remained so until August 31st,



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## *The Bristol Stage*

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during which time there had been re-painting, re-seating and improvements, practically throughout.

For the opening of the autumn season, Mr. Chute had again succeeded in securing the services of both Mr. James Bennett and Miss Kate Terry, and in addition, an undoubtedly powerful quartet of vocalists, in Messrs. Elliot Galer and Theodore Distin, with Miss Gertrude Melvyn and Miss Fanny Reeves. In the play, "The Monastery of St. Just," Miss Kate Terry was seen in two distinct characters, Mr. Charles Coghlan—again with us—appearing as Philip, King of Spain. Later, Miss Kate Terry was associated with Mr. James Bennett, then returning to London. Mr. James Bennett, on being joined by Mr. Arthur Stirling, the two tragedians appeared as Othello and Iago, Benedick and Don Pedro, etc., alternating in the leading characters.

A huge hit was made by the following production, a localized version of Dion Boucicault's famous Princess's drama, and here entitled "The Streets of Bristol." The drama was placed upon the stage in admirable style on November 7th, 1864, the scenery including such well-known localities as Griffin Lane (the fire scene), the entrance to the Theatre Royal, and Christmas Steps, whilst the arrival of the engine and fire-brigade in their uniforms and helmets, aroused the spectators to the utmost enthusiasm. The cast was exceptionally happy, Miss Fanny Addison playing Lucy Fairweather; Mr. Arthur Stirling, Trumper; Mr. Fosbrooke, with his perfect mastery of the Bristol dialect, Dan; Mr. Rogerson proving a perfect Puffy, and Mrs. Robertson an ideal Mrs. Puffy. Many Trumplers were seen after these days, including William Rignold, W. H. Vernon, J. G. Rosiere, etc., for it was a long while ere the playgoing public was through with the "Streets of Bristol."

On December 17th, 1864, Miss Madge Robertson took the part of Maria Darlington, in "A Roland for an Oliver," and then proceeded to fulfil her first London engagement.

"Blue Beard" was the pantomime of 1864-5, Mr. Peel in the title rôle, and Miss Nason (a new arrival) and Mr. Fosbrooke supporting. Clown, Mr. Alfred Stonette; columbine, Miss Kate Mandlebert. "Blue Beard" was not of the successful category, the available pantomime *artistes* not being equal to those of recent years. At the end of February, there was an excellent staging of "The Octoroon," in which, as in previously produced dramas, the company was fitted like a glove, the Jacob McClocky of Mr. George Yates being a remarkably fine piece of dramatic work. Other striking impersonations in the play were Mr. Alfred Lilly's Wah-no-tee (Dion Boucicault's original part) and Mr. Rogerson's Old Uncle Pete. But Miss Kate Mandlebert was really above previous efforts in her delightful "Paul," and Miss Fanny Addison was a capital Zoe. Mr. William Rignold, however, proved an exceptionally convincing Salem Scudder (I am contrasting these performances with those of the Adelphi cast), and I hardly remember a drama of so many

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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characters being so satisfactorily presented. For some little time both before and after this date, Mr. R. Barker, who played Colonel Point-dexter, had been associated with the Bath amateurs, was, on joining the theatrical profession, a member of the Bristol company, but proved a poor actor. Upon the occasion of his earliest association with Shakespeare—at any rate upon the Bristol stage—he appeared as the messenger in “King John,” a character to whom the Bard has assigned a dozen important lines. Mr. B. rushed through the opening four of them, and then—to employ a stage classic—“he dried up!”

A second small part in the “Octoroon” was entrusted to Mr. James Williams—irreverently designated by his confrere “Elastic Jimmy”—whose memory was hardly his greatest attribute. In this production he bid many thousands of pounds for the Octoroon, when he should have confined himself to dollars. When asked if he were not thankful to possess so much money, he replied to Alfred Lilly, who on reaching the dressing-room had put the question, “I was a jolly sight more thankful to learn that the gov’nor had gone to Lodge!” Later, he married Miss Maria Cruise, and subsequently migrated to London, where he achieved great success as a producer of comic opera, etc. His death occurred during the summer, 1903.

The Sisters Carry and Sara Nelson—daughters of Nelson, the composer—were successful in the burlesque “Ill-treated Il Trovatore,” “Ganem, the Slave of Love,” and “Ixion.” Mr. H. Talbot, a Scotch tragedian, appeared in “Macbeth,” and then the Brothers Webb as the Dromios, the brothers Rignold as the Antipholus, in Shakespeare’s “Comedy of Errors.”

Mr. George Rignold now replaced his brother William in the leading characters, and, being Easter week, the sisters Nelson were re-engaged. On May 12th, the last night of the season, Mr. Chute’s annual benefit, he presented “Robert Macaire” as his personal item, Mr. Addison afterwards appearing in his original character, Joseph Ironsides, Miss Fanny Addison as Mrs. Smythe, and Miss Carlotta Addison as Katie Mapleson, in Tom Taylor’s drama “Nine Points of the Law.”

In August Miss Maria Wilton, supported by her entire London company, paid the old city a visit, after an absence of ten years, appearing in “War to the Knife,” and H. J. Byron’s burlesques, “La Sonambula” and “Mazourka.” The company embraced Messrs. Sydney Bancroft, W. H. Montgomery, Fred Dewar, J. Clarke and Harry Cox, together with Misses Blanche and Augusta Wilton, Hughes and Lavine.

Mr. and Mrs. H. T. Craven, in the former’s enormously successful and delightful serio-comic drama, “Milky White,” with, as a second attraction, the accomplished violinist, Mr. Richard C. Levey, as “Paganini Redivivus,” followed.

A month’s engagement of Mr. Arthur Stirling, supported by Messrs. W. H. Vernon, Fosbrooke, Yates and Lilly; Misses Fanny Addison,

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## The Bristol Stage

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Jenny Anderson and Marion Jones—now Mrs. George Gordon.

It was very shortly after the arrival of Mr. Vernon as a member of the company that the following incident occurred.

With Mr. Barry Sullivan, Mr. Chute enjoyed the reputation of being the most expert swordsman in the theatrical profession, and when these two veterans met they frequently passed an enjoyable half-hour with the foils. These particulars—although fairly common property—were evidently unknown to Mr. Vernon, who was himself, be it said, a good exponent of the art. On the occasion in question, the actor was rehearsing a stage fight for use in an approaching play, and Mr. Chute, who was on the stage, was naturally interested in his new leading man's exhibition of his favourite pastime. "Not that way, Mr. Vernon," he presently said, "you would be disarmed!" "Pardon me, Mr. Chute," replied Mr. Vernon, "I rather pride myself upon my rapier practice." His manager, holding forth his hand for the other foil, instantly engaged with his opponent, and after a few passes sent the latter's foil whizzing into the pit. Vernon really blushed, for a rehearsal being about due, there were several of the company upon the stage. "I was hardly prepared for so much vigour, sir," he said, and "Bring Mr. Vernon his weapon," rejoined Mr. Chute. A stage-hand quickly dropped to the pit and passed up the foil, but probably realizing the "governor's" powers of swordsmanship better than Mr. Vernon had done, took a seat there. Once more the foils crossed, and after a slightly longer interval away went the actor's weapon into practically the same spot as before. Without a suspicion of "I told you so!" the manager resigned his foil and turned up the stage. "Thank you, sir, for a valuable lesson," cried the defeated swordsman handsomely. "We are none of us too old to learn," observed Mr. Chute gently, and obviously well pleased at the frank admission, for he added, "you see, some one in front might have known as much about it as you or I!"

On November 7th the Volunteer Artillery Corps, under the command of Viscount Glentworth, gave a Bespeak, "Presented at Court" being the *pièce de résistance*; whilst at the end of November, Mr. H. Talbot, the Scotch tragedian, commenced an engagement with "Ruy Blas," and in December, Miss Bateman gave for the first time here two performances, appearing in her famous character, "Leah."

MISS CARLOTTA ADDISON.—"Beauty and the Beast," which followed, most assuredly ranked in the very forefront of the King Street annuals, taking, as I regard it, joint honours with the earlier "Red Riding Hood," and so great was its success that it was received as the Easter attraction. Mr. George Gordon had provided some delightful scenery, and in Miss Carlotta Addison, then in her mid-teens, Mr. Chute possessed



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## *The Bristol Stage*

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a Beauty of striking personality. How alluring was her call, when alone in the "Sunny Garden of the Fragrant Rose!"

"Beast! Beast! come out to play!  
The moon is shining here as bright as day."

Mr. Arnott was excellent as the Beast, moreover!

It occurred during the last rehearsal. Mr. Arnott, who had "I hope to make you very happy here" in his part, had at an earlier rehearsal substituted the word "comfortable" for "happy," and the line did not scan, so Mr. Chute corrected him. The error was unfortunately repeated when all should have been straight sailing. "Happy! Mr. Arnott, *Happy!*" cried the manager from the centre of the circle—his accustomed seat on such occasions—"you have four feet instead of two!" We thought that we saw the point—Mr. Arnott did, he laughingly confessed a little later.

English Opera, with M<sup>lle</sup>. Jenny Bauer and Messrs. Parkinson and Durand, producing Gounod's "Faust," with a military band upon the stage, and the customary repertoire of popular works, occupied the stage during a fortnight. Upon their departure, that delightfully sympathetic actress, M<sup>lle</sup>. Beatrice, accompanied by Mr. Arthur Stirling and Mr. John Ryder, made her first appearance in Bristol, selecting the part of La Sylvia, in "Broken Ties," the fine comedy with which J. Palgrave Simpson had furnished her and the Haymarket Theatre. Another piece selected during this engagement was "M<sup>lle</sup>. de Belle Isle." It is not too much to say that the impersonations of M<sup>lle</sup>. Beatrice made an exceedingly deep impression upon the large audiences who witnessed them, and that her all too early death deprived the stage of a personality difficult to replace.

"Faust and Marguerite," with Miss Carlotta Addison, and Messrs. W. H. Vernon and George Yates; "Woodcock's Little Game" and the "Hidden Hand," held the boards until the eve of Easter was reached, "Ivanhoe," an excellent burlesque by H. J. Byron, being next presented, the cast including the Misses Carlotta and Fanny Addison, Emily Miller, Maud Haydon and Maria Cruise, with Messrs. Fosbrooke, Arnott, Barker, etc.

On April 13th the sisters Addison had their benefit and attracted a bumper house. The performance commenced with Dion Boucicault's great Haymarket comedy, "London Assurance," Mr. Addison coming from town to appear as Sir Harcourt Courtly—his original impersonation; and concluded with "Guy Mannering," Mr. Walter Fisher—a local tenor of exceptional ability, and subsequently well known on the London boards as the original representative of several leading characters in opera, at the Philharmonic, Olympic, Court and Savoy theatres—making his first stage appearance as Henry Bertram. Mr. Addison played Dominie Sampson;

## The Bristol Stage

Mr. W. H. Vernon, Dandie Dinmont ; Miss Fanny Addison, Meg Merri-  
lees ; and Miss Carlotta Addison, Flora ; whilst the 27th was selected  
by Mr. J. H. Chute for his annual benefit performance. It being the  
last of these events to be taken at the historic house, and the final appear-  
ance of Miss Henrietta Hodson as a member of its histrionic company, I  
append the text of its announcement *in extenso* :—

### MR. CHUTE

begs respectfully to announce that his

#### BENEFIT

will take place

On FRIDAY, APRIL 27TH, 1866

On FRIDAY evening, April 27th, 1866,

Will be presented the Haymarket Comedy, written by Benjamin Webster,  
Esq., called

### THE ROUSED LION

STANISLAS FONBLANCHE (The Roused Lion), Mr. CHUTE  
(His first appearance this Season.)

Hector Mauleon	Mr. W. H. Vernon	Monsieur Horace de	
Ernest Fonblanche	Mr. Alfred Lilly	St. Tropez ..	Mr. Frayley
Gustave d'Herbelin	Mr. Louis Munro	Monsieur de Boussac	Mr. Bennett
Antinous de Luxeuil	Mr. Williams	Baptiste .. ..	Mr. Travers
Mde. de St. Luc	Miss Fanny Addi- son	Madame de Bazan	Miss Hooten
Leonie .. ..	Miss Carlotta Ad- dison	Madame de St. Tro- pez .. ..	Miss B. Clarke
Baronne Cabrion	Miss Billing	Madame Boussac	Miss Arnott
Mdlle. Suzanne Gras-		Mdles. de St. Maurice ..	Misses Bullock and E. Clarke
sette de Villedieu	Mrs. Rouse		
Baron de Cabrion	Mr. Rogerson, jr.	Mdlle. Bourhave	Miss Holmes
Monsieur de Bazan	Mr. Temple	Madame Ludovic	Miss Vaughan

To be followed by the Comedy, in Two Acts, by Haynes Bailey, Esq., called

### PERFECTION ;

#### OR, THE LADY OF MUNSTER

KATE O'BRIEN (The Lady of Munster) .. Miss HENRIETTA HODSON (Mrs.  
R. W. Pigeon)

(Who has most kindly consented to appear on this special occasion and for  
this night only)

## The Bristol Stage

With the Songs—"OH, WHISPER WHAT THOU FEELEST," and "KATE KEARNEY"

Charles Paragon .. .. .	Mr. W. H. Vernon
Sir Lawrence Paragon .. .. .	Mr. Barker
Sam .. .. .	Mr. Fosbrooke
Susan .. .. .	Miss Emily Miller.

Duett .. .. Misses Cruise and Jenny Anderson.

Solo, Cornet-a-pistons, "La Figlia del Regimento," by Mr. G. Rennie Powell,  
Who has kindly consented to perform.

To Conclude with Planche's celebrated Extravaganza of

### GOLDEN FLEECE

The First Part—Entirely Original, founded on the Third and Fourth Books  
of the "Argonautics," entitled

#### JACON IN COLCHIS

The Chorus .. .. .	Mr. W. H. Vernon
Aetes, King of Colchis, Professor of the Original Golden Fleece .. .. .	Mr. Barker
Jason, Commander of "the Argo" and son of Aeson, the deposed King of Colchis .. .. .	Miss E. Miller
Anonymus, Captain of the Royal Guards .. .. .	Mr. Williams
Medea, Daughter of Aetes, an enchanting creature ..	Miss Fanny Addison
Argonauts, the Crew of "the Argo." By a Number of Young Persons under Fifty.	

Colchian Nobles, Sages, Guards, etc.

The Second Part—Very freely translated from the popular tragedy  
of Euripides, and particularly adapted to this stage, under  
the title of

#### MEDEA IN CORINTH

The Chorus .. .. .	Mr. W. H. Vernon
Creon, King of Corinth—Mr. BARKER—who by particular desire, and on this occasion only, has most obligingly consented to be twice a King	
Jason, Married, but not settled, exceedingly classical, but very far from correct .. .. .	Miss Emily Miller
Medea Jason's lawfully-wedded wife, and mother of two fine boys, but rendered a fury by her wrongs	Miss Fanny Addison
Mermeros, Phereas, the two fine boys aforesaid ..	Master Elder, Master Younger

Psuche, a good old soul—nurse to the two fine boys afore-  
said .. .. .

Mrs. J. Rouse

N.B. The Public is respectfully informed that, regardless of the trouble,  
Mr. VERNON has consented to represent the whole body of THE  
CHORUS, rendering at least fifty-nine Male Voices entirely unnecessary.

Argonautic Youths—Misses Hooten, Arnott, K. Anders, J. Clarke, B. Clarke,  
E. Billing, Vaughan, Holmes, Bullock, etc.



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## *The Bristol Stage*

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That ever appealing cause, the "Lifeboat," brought the Histrionic Club members to a successful effort. They performed the "Two Bonny-castles," the "Child of the Regiment," with the huge attraction of Miss Henrietta Hodson as Josephine, and the extravaganza, "The Rosebud of Stingingnettle Farm." Mr. S. Barnes sang "God Bless the Noble Lifeboat," and Mr. Walter Fisher "Onward to Victory," which I had especially composed for the occasion, to words by General Garibaldi.

The autumn season of 1866, opening on September 17th, showed many recognized favourites, and some new arrivals destined to be included in that category, Mr. W. H. Vernon, stage manager. Tom Robertson's "Society" and Burnand's burlesque "Paris" constituted the introductory items, Mr. H. Talbot next ensuing, to be succeeded by Mr. Charles Rice, in "Rip Van Winkle." Mr. Gardiner Coyne, an Irish comedian with an excellent singing voice, appeared in a round of characters. "Little Don Giovanni," H. J. Byron's burlesque, with Miss Jane Rignold, having a satisfactory run as a supporting item. Miss Siddons, great-granddaughter of the famous actress, played a few nights' engagement of the "legitimate" order, Mr. James Bennett being especially engaged as her ally. The Pantomime of "Robin Hood," the last to be produced here previous to the opening of the new theatre, was performed with Miss Jane Rignold as the hero. It caused no little sensation by presenting in the harlequinade an exterior view of the New Theatre Royal, Park Row, significantly labelled as to date of opening, October 14th, 1867, less than a twelve months' interval!

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Kean were followed by Miss Amy Sedgwick, accompanied by Mr. John Nelson, chief interest laying in her impersonation of Hester Grazebrook, in "The Unequal Match," in which character she had appeared with such great success at the Haymarket.

The Misses Kate and Ellen Terry appeared in "The Sister's Penance," a drama written for them by Tom Taylor and A. W. Dubourg.

Miss Herbert again brought her company from the St. James's Theatre, the *personnel* consisting of Misses Herbert, Ada Cavendish, Barry, Kate Kearney and Mrs. Frank Matthews, together with Messrs. Frank Matthews, Henry Irving, Gaston Murray, E. Dyas, L. C. Burleigh, J. D. Stoyke, J. H. Allen, De Solla, and George Ellis; Mr. W. H. Vernon also being specially engaged.

## CHAPTER VIII

A.D. 1867

WITH the opening of the New Theatre Royal, Park Row, on October 14th, 1867, the management at King Street was—on the preceding Monday—placed in the hands of Mr. Arthur Wood, who opened with Edmund Falconer's capital comedy, "Extremes," and Byron's burlesque, "William Tell," having at his command for the season a really first-class company.

At the festive season, the pantomime, "Little Tom Tucker," was produced, the clever child actresses, the Sisters Ellis, being in the cast.

With "A Romantic Attachment," a comedietta from his own pen and which had been successfully performed at the Haymarket, Mr. Arthur Wood took a benefit, being assisted by Mr. J. W. Thorne, the popular Bristol amateur.

With a view to meeting the desires of the Bath public, "Little Tom Tucker" was withdrawn from Bristol on January 10th, and after a couple of nights, on which Mr. W. H. Vernon appeared, the season ended. No pantomime was again attempted at the Theatre Royal whilst under the Chute management, the stage facilities of the New Theatre being quite inadequate to modern pantomime requirements.

But that Mr. Chute had no intention of deserting his old love is evident from the various efforts in following years to supply it with suitable material. On February 10th, 1868, Miss Marie Wilton's company with "Caste," the most talked of and admired dramatic entertainment of the day, commenced an eight nights' engagement here, playing the other two nights in each of the weeks at Bath. This "four nights a week" method, I may state, was generally maintained until the following May (1868), when the lease of the "Bath Theatre Royal was declined by Mr. Chute.

But to hark back a trifle, this original provincial "Caste" Company was an excellent one. Miss Ada Dyas, Miss Bessie Harding and Mrs. Buckingham White, appearing as Esther, Polly and the Marquise respectively, and Messrs. Richard Younge, Charles Coghlan, E. Shepherd and F. Glover, as D'Alroy, Hawtree, Eccles and Sam Gerridge. Several

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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companies enacting plays possessed of similar stage requirements followed in the succeeding years, Mrs. J. L. Sefton bringing W. S. Gilbert's delightful works, "Pygmalion and Galatea," with Miss Rose Leclercq, Mr. and Mrs. Horseman, etc. Mr. Leigh Murray producing "All that Glitters is not Gold," and "Still Waters Run Deep," Farne's "Nemesis" being played, with Mrs. Charles Groves, Mr. H. Vernon, in "Mammon," and numerous other stage attractions. The majority of the works were, however, subsequently—on occasions, during the ensuing week—seen at the new house, and as it is difficult to travel simultaneously by two roads, thither—with some future references to the Theatre Royal—I shall elect to follow them. Still, I must confess to looking back upon the old nights at King Street with somewhat mixed feelings of regret, as also of relief.

Refreshment bars were thereat unknown at the date with which I have been dealing; there were, however, prescriptive rights to vend and also to proclaim certain non-alcoholic beverages in the popular parts of the theatre, but as the front row of dress-circle patrons were seated but a few inches above those seated in the pit, the proximity was as great as didn't matter! The vender in the pit, so far back as I can remember, was an ancient dame, who never appeared to further age subsequent to my very early days, and who was possessed of a voice and uniformity of delivery, which might have materially aided Madame Angot in her business, profession, or calling! The gallery refreshment department, was, I fancy, in the hands of a succession of grandsons of the lady of the pit, who having studied under her, correctly reflected the unchanging character of both voice and declamation, instituted by their senior, below. The intervals between the acts and plays, of which latter there were always two or more each evening, were their licensed opportunities, and at the moment that the curtain-roller bumped the stage, came the cry from the pit, echoed by that from the gallery—"Apples, oranges; ginger-beer or lemonade!" This continued until the up-curtain bell rang, when without a further sound the old lady would resume her seat—*hers*, however packed the pit might otherwise be—and like a statue, gaze towards the stage in readiness for her next opportunity of turning an honest penny. I question very much whether she appreciated or even mentally saw that which was passing before her eyes, be it either an elopement or a murder, her mind being interested only in the curtain's rise and fall!

There may be of my readers some who see nothing much in the incident here related, but if they had just witnessed the death of "gentle Eva, whose little hour on earth had done so much good," they might have considered the "apples and oranges" cry a trifle too premature.

I am by no means sure, though, that the practice was a Bristol monopoly, for I recollect that somewhere in the late 50's or early 60's, a song chorus ran as follows:—



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## *The Bristol Stage*

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“When she saw the curtain drop,  
Her gingerbeer always went ‘Pop’!  
Gingerbread, nuts, crack ‘em and try,  
Apples and oranges, bill of the play!”

This ditty was brought to my notice by a local vocalist named Howard, who sung at the Avonmouth concerts, so perhaps after all it had Bristol only for its theme.

Yet even this custom, objectional in some respects as it was, did not entirely lack compensating advantages, there being none of that absurdly irritating bobbing up and down of the curtain with which one is now confronted, and from which one might (and perhaps rightly) assume that the scene-plot sent forward by the company’s manager was supplemented by a notification to the effect that “this is a three, four, or half-dozen curtain act!” with subsequent rehearsed cries of “Speech! speech!” whereas a real appreciation on the part of the audience might call for scarcely a single summons—and certainly no speech!

Another feature of the “old house” which might also find considerable tolerance amongst the majority of those who visit the theatre in order to both see and hear, rather than to be seen and heard, was to be found in the insistence upon silence whilst the play was proceeding, demanded by “the gods.” No better behaved audience than the gallery-ites of the Theatre Royal was to be found, but having paid their money they meant to have, and that uninterruptedly, their money’s worth. Patrons of booked seats who entered after the performance had commenced, and fussed with opera-cloak or what-not, possibly in order to claim attention from admiring eyes, were invariably met by a storm of hisses, or the cry “order, animals.”

Perchance it may be remarked, “so much for order in the circle, but what if the disturbance proceeded from the upper reaches of the auditorium, perhaps from the gallery itself?” The suggested penalty in such circumstances was more drastic and, like unto the laws of the Medes and Persians, never varied—“Chuck ‘n over in the pit,” was its form; still, in few places of amusement was greater order maintained during the performance than in the Theatre Royal, Bristol, although I never witnessed, or heard of, the up-stairs penalty being carried out by way of public example.

Why had Mr. Chute not elected to enlarge and improve the historic house? Sentiment may very probably have suggested such a course, but prudence must have said it “nay!” The locality, home of the élite at the building of the theatre, was no longer even residential, whilst the routes of access from other parts of the city were difficult and uninviting.

## CHAPTER IX

A.D. 1867

WHAT probably led to the ultimate decision was the circumstance of Mr. Charles Hengler having, with a high-class equestrian exhibition, just previously and during two seasons, attracted enormous patronage to the Rifle Drill Hall (now a portion of the University buildings) at the top of Park Street.

The property Mr. Chute acquired was a mansion adjoining his garden, once the home of the Fuidge family, who however had migrated further west, and the house being void. Yet even historic importance attached to the place, in the circumstance that here Charlotte, Consort of George III, and Princess Elizabeth partook of luncheon when visiting the city!

Upon the completion of his purchase, Mr. Chute called in Mr. C. J. Phipps, the architect with whom he had been concerned in the building of the new Theatre Royal, Bath, and who had designed quite a number of other provincial theatres, as well as the latest London house, the Queen's, Long Acre, and to which Miss Henrietta Hodson, Mr. Rignold and others had bent their steps. So prolific was Mr. C. J. Phipps in the way of theatre designs, that it was said—rightly or wrongly, I am not in a position to state—that the pigeon-holes at his study contained complete plans for the re-erection of every theatre in the Kingdom, should fire or other circumstances call for the provision of a new dramatic home, and that he was ever ready to entrain.

For the New Theatre Royal, in Park Row, Mr. Phipps had designed a building, the auditorium of which provided seating accommodation for 2,154 persons, this being 500 in excess of that existing at the Theatre Royal, King Street. Of these, the pit would furnish room for 800, whilst 700 were allotted to the gallery. On pressure nights, that is when "standing-room" was taken advantage of, the theatre would admit of an audience of 2,800 being present.

Such striking changes have since taken place in front of the curtain (to which, however, reference will be found later in these annals), that I think it well to warn readers that the auditorium, as now existing at "The Prince's," was a design of more recent years.

Mr. Phipps, however, had provided for a commodious stage, as, including the scene-dock, it was 107 feet deep, the height to the grid being 59 feet, and from cellar to roof 79 feet. The "wing" space beyond the proscenium on both left and right, was ample for all purposes, whilst

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## The Bristol Stage

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the dressing-rooms provided for the *corps dramatique* were both numerous and conveniently arranged. Upon the occasion of the Opening, the lessee, after acknowledging the warmest of greetings from his patrons, related the foregoing particulars, and others of less interest to present-day patrons. The New Theatre, one learnt, built in the interest of the Drama, had been completed at a cost of £18,000, all of which had been paid. Mr. Chute severally introduced those whom he described as "the working bees of the House that Jack built." Mr. C. J. Phipps, by whom it was designed, Mr. Davis, who built the house for Jack, Mr. George Gordon, who adorned the house and painted the Act-drop; then Mr. George Wells, who had designed and painted the representations of "Comedy" and "Tragedy" which (then) embellished the proscenium. The inaugurating *personnel* of Bristol's new dramatic home, being fully disclosed upon the announce-bill, I cannot do better than reproduce it.

### NEW THEATRE ROYAL, BRISTOL

Manager .. .. . JAMES HENRY CHUTE

Residing at No. 2 Park Row, Bristol.

### OPENING NIGHT

Monday, October 14th, 1867.

On which occasion will be presented Shakspeare's

### T E M P E S T,

OR, THE ENCHANTED ISLE

With entirely new scenery, decorations, appointments, costumes.

THE SCENERY by Mr. Geo. Gordon, Mr. Wm. Gordon, Mr. Phillips, Mr. Horn, Mr. Harford, Mr. Spong, Mr. Frank Jones and Mr. Bell.

THE MACHINERY .. .. . By Messrs. Shattock and Eddels

THE COSTUMES .. By Mr. May, Mrs. Shapcott, Mrs. Adams, and Assistants

THE MUSIC selected from the Works of Purcell, Linley, Bishop, Arne, and Hatton.

THE ENTR'ACTES .. .. . By MENDELSSOHN

Prospero .. .. . Mr. James Bennett  
Specially engaged to perform this Character.

Ariel .. .. . Miss Emily Cross

From the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, especially engaged to perform this Character.

Caliban ..	Mr. W. H. Vernon	Miranda ..	Miss Jane Rignold
Trinculo ..	Mr. Fosbrooke	Stephano ..	Mr. Alfred Raymond
Alonza ..	Mr. Rosiere	Ferdinand ..	Mr. Augustus Glover
Sebastian ..	Mr. Arnott	Juno.. ..	Miss Cruise

Principal Spirits attending on Prospero: Mr. Carl Rowella, Miss Kate Mandelbert, and Miss Jenny de Brent.



## *The Bristol Stage*

At SEVEN o'clock the BAND will play WEBER's OVERTURE, "The Ruler of the Spirits."

MR. CHUTE will ADDRESS THE AUDIENCE.

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN, Verse and Chorus, by THE COMPANY.

Solos by Miss Cruise, Miss Robertha Erskine and Miss Emily Cross, followed by

AN OVERTURE ON SHAKSPERIAN AIRS

Principally from the TEMPEST, Arranged by Mr. CHAPMAN.

After which will be revived Shakespeare's Play, in Five Acts, of the

### T E M P E S T

FROM THE TEXT OF SHAKSPERE

Prospero, the rightful Duke of Milan .. .. .	Mr. Jas. Bennett
Antonio, his brother, the usurping Duke of Milan	Mr. Alfd. Lilly
Alonzo, King of Naples .. .. .	Mr. Rosiere
Sebastian, his brother .. .. .	Mr. Arnott
Ferdinand, son to the King of Naples .. .. .	Mr. Augustus Glover
Gonzalo.. } .. .. .	{ Mr. A. Hilton
Adrian .. } .. .. .	
Francisco } .. .. .	
Caliban, a savage and deformed slave .. .. .	Mr. W. H. Vernon
Trinculo, a jester .. .. .	Mr. Fosbrooke
Stephano, a drunken butler .. .. .	Mr. Alfred Raymond
Miranda, daughter to Prospero .. .. .	Miss Jane Rignold
Ariel, an airy spirit .. .. .	Miss Emily Cross

#### SPIRITS IN THE VISION.

Iris .. .. .	Miss Lelia Ellis
Ceres .. .. .	Miss Emily Cross
June .. .. .	Miss Cruise
Chronos, or Time .. .. .	Mr. Arnold

NYMPHS—Misses Frailey, Frayley, Widgery, Harwell, Merchant and Merchant.

REAPERS—Messrs. Bullock, Hooten, Vaughan, Brewer and Dyer.

#### SPIRITS IN THE MASQUE

Miss Austen, Miss Eliza Gordon, Miss Jane Gordon, Miss Kate Hastings, Miss Parry, Miss Hooten, Miss Benyon, and Mesdames Ellis and Rosiere.

#### OTHER SPIRITS ATTENDING ON PROSPERO

Mr. Carl Rowella,  
Messrs. Parker, Williams, Ellis, Anderson, James, Hosegood, Edgar and McAllam  
Miss Jenny de Brent. Miss Kate Mandlebert.  
Demoiselles Arnott, Watson, Clark, B. Clark, Mary Hooten, Bullock, Vaughan,  
Harwell, C. Vaughan, Goodyer, Kate Hastings, Brewer, Dyson, Jenkins,  
Widgery, C. Jenkins, Goodyer, Mack, Edwards, E. Edwards, Mary Ellen  
White, Griffiths, Frayley, Merchant and H. Merchant. Lelia Ellis and  
Florence Ellis.

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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### PROGRAMME OF SCENERY AND INCIDENTS

#### ACT I. SCENE I.

A SHIP IN A STORM.

THE ISLAND

Overlooking the Sea.

During the progress of the Scene, the Waters abate, the Sun rises, and the Tide recedes, leaving the yellow Sands, to which Ferdinand is invited by Ariel and the Spirits.

"Come unto these Yellow Sands"

#### ACT II. SCENE I.

INTERIOR OF THE ISLAND

#### ACT III. SCENE I.

ANOTHER PART OF THE ISLAND.

The Scene is Gradually Transformed  
from

Barrenness to Luxuriant Vegetation.

After which enter many Strange Shapes bearing Fruits and Flowers, with  
which they form

A BANQUET

And disappear. The Scene ends with

A DANCE OF SPIRITS!

Arranged by Mr. CARL ROWELLA.

#### ACT IV. SCENE I.

PROSPERO'S CELL.

SCENE 2.

A MASQUE.

Iris appears, passed by Venus and Cupid, cutting the clouds towards Paphos.  
Dove drawn.

Ceres (Ariel) advances, surrounded by Plenty.

GRECIAN LANDSCAPE

with

TEMPLE OF ELEUSIS

The Dance arranged by Miss Kate Mandlebert.

Juno approaches, Drawn by Peacocks,  
Accompanied by the Graces and the Seasons, with other Spirits, followed by a

CLASSICAL ALLEGORY,

Representing the Course of Time, Chronos as Time surmounting the Globe.  
Luna in her Car, accompanied by the Stars, personified, sinketh before the  
approach of Phœbus.

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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ASCENT OF PHŒBUS in the CHARIOT of the SUN.

THE CELL OF PROSPERO

The Act terminates with a noise of Hunters

SPIRITS ENTER IN VARIOUS SHAPES,

And hunt Caliban, Trinculo and Stephano, set on by Ariel.

### ACT V

BEFORE THE CELL OF PROSPERO.

"My Ariel chick—to the elements.

Be free, and fare thee well."

"Where the Bee sucks" Ariel.

NIGHT DESCENDS

THE SPIRITS, RELEASED BY PROSPERO

Take their flight from the Island into the air.

Chorus of Spirits, Where the Bee Sucks

Morning breaks and shows

A SHIP IN A CALM

prepared to convey the King and his companions back to Naples.

The Ship gradually Sails Off.

THE ISLAND RECEDES FROM SIGHT,  
and

Ariel remains alone in Mid-Air  
Watching the departure of his late Master

DISTANT CHORUS OF SPIRITS.

To be followed by Buckstone's Farce of

### A ROUGH DIAMOND.

Cousin Joe .. Mr. Fredk Buck-  
stone

(Son of the eminent Comedian)

Lord Plato .. Mr. Williams

Sir William Ever- Mr. Augustus  
green Glover

Capt. Blenheim Mr. George Nelson

Margery Miss Roberta Erskine

(Her first appearance From the The-  
atres Royal, Edinburgh and Bir-  
mingham)

Lady Plato .. Miss Eliza Gordon

Stage Manager, Mr. W. H. Vernon. Leader of Band, Mr. Chapman.

Repiteur, Mr. R. Watson. Scenic Artist, Mr. Geo. Gordon.

BOX OFFICE (in Park Row) Open from Eleven to Half-past Four.

PRICES for the Opening Night.

Dress Circle and Orchestra Stalls, 5/-; Upper Circle and Amphi-  
theatre, 3/-; Pit Stalls, 2/6; Pit, 2/-; Gallery, 1/-

Private Boxes, Eight persons, £2 6s.; Six Persons, £1 16s.; Four  
persons, £1 4s. No second Price.

DOORS OPEN at a Quarter past Six. COMMENCE at SEVEN.

The prices of Admission after the first night will be as follows:—



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## *The Bristol Stage*

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Dress Circle, 3/6; Second Price, 2/-; Stalls, retained the whole evening, 4/-; Upper circle and Amphitheatre, 2/-; Second Price, 1/6; Pit Stalls, 1/6; Pit, 1/-; Gallery, 6d. Private Boxes, £2, 30/-, and £1.

The admission on the Opening Night to all parts will (as far as practicable) be by Ticket; and no more Tickets will be issued than the House will conveniently accommodate. Tickets now on Sale—To Upper Boxes, Pit, Gallery, and Stalls.

Regulations for Carriages will appear in future announcements

REFRESHMENTS may be obtained in the Theatre, supplied by Mrs. Caldicott, Caldicott's Hotel, St. Augustine's Parade.

Books of the Words, Sixpence. No fee for Booking Places. Opera glasses on Hire.

THE TEMPEST will be performed Every Evening during the Week,  
Saturday included.

Places may be booked (without fees) for each evening.

Children in Arms not Admitted. Printed at the *Mercury and Daily Post* Offices, Broad Street.

All pleased the lessee save one, who proved the fly in the ointment, and when a few days later a Clifton lady remarked that "off the stage" the actor in question was a "fine handsome man," she was immediately countered with Mr. Chute's reply, "but *on* the stage he is a wooden actor!"

MISS EMILY CROSS.—"The Tempest" kept possession of the stage for a month, subsequent to which Mr. James Bennett appeared as Rob Roy, Miss Emily Cross as Diana Vernon, Miss Robertha Erskine as Helen McGregor, and Mr. Frank Crellin—on joining the company—as Sir Francis Osbaldistone.

"Aladdin" was the first pantomime (1867-8), Miss Emily Cross in the title part, Mr. E. Arnott as Abanazar, with Messrs. Frank Crellin, Fosbrooke and Carl Rowella, Misses Robertha Erskine, Jane Gordon and Jenny de Brent (Mrs. Rowella) likewise in the cast. The harlequinade continued a feature of the Christmas productions, and following custom, there was another play at each representation. "Aladdin" was a pronounced success.

Miss Emily Cross afterwards appeared as Oberon in "Midsummer's Night's Dream," this being followed by "Flying Scud," with Mr. W. H. Vernon as Tom Meredith, and Mr. Arthur Wood "Old Boots." At Easter, Miss Reinhardt appeared in the "Angel of Midnight," Miss Jenny Baur and her Opera Company following. Mr. Sims Reeves, then at the summit of his reputation, put in one night, appearing as Harry Bertram in "Guy Mannering"; the Julia Mannering was Miss Emily Cross; Gabriel, Mr. Patey; Dominie Sampson, Mr. G. F. Rowe; and Dandie Dinmont, Mr. Chute. It was a musical as well as a histrionic treat.

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## The Bristol Stage

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Mr. Felix Rogers, with his accomplished little wife, Miss Jenny Willmore, the original Minerva and Ixion, appeared in that popular Burnand burlesque, and other pieces, and then Mr. Sothern was welcomed at the new house. On the occasion of this visit he was accompanied by Miss Ada Cavendish, and was taking his farewell, previous to leaving for the U.S. "The Hero of Romance," a moderately successful play, translated from the French by Mr. T. W. Robertson, was the first production of the week, to be succeeded by "David Garrick" (Tom Robertson's), Mr. Sothern's original character and his world-renowned Lord Dundreary in "Our American Cousin."

What a splendid career had this famous comedian! A pronounced success in America, as Lord Dundreary in "Our English Cousin," brought him to the Haymarket theatre, where it was only necessary to shift the personality of the character suggesting the title, from Dundreary to Asa Trenchard, to give us the play of that name with which we became so familiar. Subsequently, he appeared as "David Garrick," and was far and away the finest exponent of that character that I have seen. I remember that on the occasion of the first night of this play, at the Haymarket Theatre, Mr. Sothern was vociferously called upon to make a speech, for his triumph had been somewhat in question owing to his rather pronounced American accent. "It was thought," he said, "that I should not keep my friends if I played a lover, my voice being too hard and unsympathetic for such a part. I don't know how that may be on the stage, but in private life, I assure you I get on as well as most people."

It was—as stated earlier in this story—in 1864, that the popular American comedian first visited our city, at the Theatre Royal, but the following incidents related to the present engagement, at the New Theatre. Mr. Sothern, in thanking the audience for the warmth of the welcome accorded, congratulated not only Mr. Chute, but the city, upon the possession of so fine a theatre. "When I was here before," he said, "it was at the old house. Everything was cramped and there was not room off the stage in which to swing a cat! Not that I have any recollection of *wanting* to swing a cat! but if I had so desired, I could not have done it there. In the wings *here*, I could swing two cats—one in each hand!"

An incident of a somewhat social character I feel urged to relate. A number of citizens had invited Mr. Sothern to an informal dinner at the Royal Hotel, whereat, with table beautifully laid, an excellent repast was served. Unfortunately, some one or more of the company, during the dessert, were persistent in calling upon their guest, to "recite, or act something." In David Garrick's exit from Ingot's drawing-room, whilst pretending to be under the influence of drink! he tears down the *portière* curtains, and with "ye common cry of curs, whose breath I hate, as reek from rotten fens, I banish you—thus!" At the

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## The Bristol Stage

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dinner in question, Mr. Sothern being really offended at the shockingly bad taste of some of his hosts, arose, delivered the above speech, and there being no *portière* curtains, clutched at the table-cloth, and in a moment, as Mr. Sothern disappeared through the door, the carpet was covered with smashed decanters, valuable glasses and dessert service, the which must have cost the entertainers a pretty penny to put right. Some reference to this being made to Mr. Sothern at a subsequent date, the comedian, in the most level tones, replied, "Well, you *would* have something, and that was the only thing that I could remember ; you see, I had been acting it."

In January, 1917, Mr. Sothern, at the command of his medical attendant, abandoned a portion of his farewell American tour, and retired from the stage.

Miss Marie Wilton's company in Tom Robertson's comedies, "Caste" and "Play," followed, and was here for twelve nights. The combination included Miss Ada Dyas, Blanche Wilton, Louisa Thorne and Sophie Larkin, together with Messrs. Richard Younge, Charles Coghlan and J. W. Ray.

**BARRY SULLIVAN.**—After a fortnight with Madame Celeste, Barry Sullivan fulfilled his first engagement here, appearing in "Hamlet," "Richelieu," "Richard III," "Lady of Lyons" and "The Stranger." He was accompanied by Miss Kate Saville and further supported by Mr. W. H. Vernon and other members of the local company.

Barry, or, to speak by the card, Thomas Sullivan, was born on July 5th, 1821, at Birmingham, his father being a private in the Duke of York's Irish regiment ; but three years later the family removed to Bristol, where his grandfather was already resident, and where he was sent to the R.C. day-school (St. Joseph's) in Trenchard Street. There he met as fellow-pupils his life-long friends, George Harvey, and also Robert Sidney Pratten, who subsequently became the *première* flautist at Covent Garden. Very early in his school days, boy Sullivan gave evidence of a wonderfully retentive memory, as well as powers of elocution entirely unexpected, and Martin Bayne, head-master of the school, was not a little proud of his pupil.

Upon the death of his parents, Master Tom was sent to the Stokes Croft Endowed School, but even whilst at Trenchard Street the dramatic spirit was strongly in evidence, for he has related to a small circle—of which more anon—that it was his custom, together with "Bob" Pratten, who at this period performed finely upon the tin-whistle, to give an *al fresco* entertainment from the steps of their school-house ; but neither melody nor elocution was forthcoming before George Harvey had collected what he considered a sufficient tribute in half-pence and farthings, to compensate the orchestra and tragedian for their efforts. When there was sufficient cash in hand for three gallery seats at the theatre,



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## *The Bristol Stage*

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thither they bent their steps, "but the occasions were all too few," added Barry, in relating the foregoing autobiography.

Following his short course of education, Barry Sullivan became office boy with Mr. Burges, the town clerk. Determined to give office life the go-by, and, by hook or by crook, find a place upon the stage, and coming across a small company of strolling players then making their way to Swansea, Sullivan ran away from home.

It was at the age of sixteen that the famous tragedian (that was to be) first set foot upon the professional stage, but it was not until ten years later that he assumed the maiden name of his mother, and became known as "Barry Sullivan"!

On the eve of his twenty-first birthday Mr. Barry Sullivan married Miss Mary Amory, the daughter of Lieut. John Amory, formerly of the 29th Regt., but at this time a macer in the Edinburgh Court of Sessions. Barry was an accepted visitor at the father's house, but Miss Amory being then but sixteen years of age, the parental consent to the union was barely hoped for, so the marriage—the outcome of affection and a runaway one to boot—was celebrated at the Protestant Church of St. Cuthbert, Edinburgh. Speedy forgiveness ensued, and at his death Lieut. Amory bequeathed his fortune to his daughter. Mr. Barry Sullivan's eldest son "Amory" was named after his maternal grandfather.

The little circle to which I referred just now was a dinner function to which Mr. Barry Sullivan, who greatly disliked more extensive banquetting assemblies, invited upon the occasion of his visits here, a very few friends, these consisting of Mr. J. H. Chute, and his sons George and James Macready Chute, his old school-fellow Mr. George Harvey, with my father, brother and self. His son, Amory, was never of the party, and although in the course of years I saw the numbers dwindle, as my father, Mr. Chute and his son George were summoned to the great majority, their seats were never filled by new-comers. On these occasions, Mr. Barry Sullivan, at no time, in private life, the ponderous tragic figure tradition presents him, was as bright and cheerful as a boy might be, and invariably shared with us the enjoyment of the choice cigars which were brought us with the coffee. Many times I have dined with the great tragedian in town, but beyond the limits of this cosy Bristol circle, have never seen him smoke. Amongst the anecdotes related by our host was one somewhat of the nature of the experience of Mr. Sothorn already chronicled, for invited by a few citizens—professed play-goers—to a quiet dinner at the Clifton Down Hotel, the famous actor found himself neighboured by a local solicitor, who proved anxious to inculcate his own views as to theatrical matters, one of these being that "Shakespeare and the drama were all very well, but no competitors with opera, for real enjoyment." Greatly surprised, Mr. Barry Sullivan quietly intimated that he could hardly be expected to agree. "Oh, yes," persisted the other, "there's altogether greater enthusiasm

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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at the opera." Barry suggested that he had not been without evidence of enthusiasm for either Shakespeare or other dramatic works. "Well, look here, Mr. Sullivan! were you ever in the front row of the gallery at Covent Garden, upon the occasion of the production of a grand opera, with really first-class vocalists?" "No, sir," replied the actor, and this time in that remarkable tragic voice of his, "thank God I was never in the front row of a theatre gallery in my life." "Which was not true," he remarked to us, with a merry twinkle, "for I had been many times in the gallery at King Street, and always made a dash for the front row. But I thought it so rude to invite me to dinner in order to belittle my profession." Then it was that we learnt of the early days with his companion, Sidney Pratten.

Anecdotes framed around Barry Sullivan hang as thick as blackberries, not all, however, being associated with Bristol, but the following are of local origin. The play was "Hamlet" and the six "extra" damsels bearing the coffin of Ophelia were standing at the wing, waiting for their cue, and not exhibiting that attitude which Hamlet thought was called for by their occupation. "Young ladies, young ladies," reprimanded Mr. Sullivan, "are you aware that the coffin which you bear is supposed to contain the body of a very estimable maiden, and you swing it about as though it were the remains of an old tom-cat."

It is not a Bristol story, but it is an experience personal to myself, so I may relate it. I had dined with Mr. Barry Sullivan in town, and as was my custom, knowing the arrangements best suited to his profession, at six o'clock I prepared to take my departure. He, however, was not acting that night. "What are you doing this evening?" he asked, a question never previously put to me by him, and that, on the only occasion when it would have given me a shock! However, I had to face it, so replied, "Well, Barrett has given me a box!" "To see 'Hamlet'—I should like to go!" That settled it! Polini (Wilson Barrett's manager) welcomed me, and scarce believing his eyes, whispered, "Is not that Barry Sullivan?" I nodded reply, and the intelligence, I have little doubt, was conveyed to the dressing-room in very few minutes. Later, Polini came to the box with the information that Mr. Barrett hoped that I would, as usual, go to his dressing-room for a few minutes' chat. "Certainly," I answered. "And Mr. Barrett hopes that you will bring Mr. Barry Sullivan with you!" "Oh, no," interposed the tragedian, "I never see any one during the performance." "Oh! Mr. Wilson Barrett does, Mr. Palgrave always goes round," urged Polini. "Ah! I must not break my own rule," said Barry, so I went alone. I had barely entered the box on my return, before Barry gave vent to thoughts which had evidently been occupying his mind, for he said, with some excitement traceable in his voice, "You see I *could* not go, Rennie, for he would have been sure to have asked me how I liked it. If I said 'not at all,' that would have been rude, and if, out of politeness, I had answered

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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'very much,' in to-morrow's *Daily Telegraph* I should have read, 'Barry Sullivan witnesses Wilson Barrett's "Hamlet," and says——!'" His mental vision was, I think, a true revelation of what would have followed the suggested visit behind the curtain.



## CHAPTER X

A.D. 1868

**M**R. W. H. VERNON, who had been engaged for the New Globe Theatre, London, took his farewell benefit, selecting "Wild Oats" and the "Chevalier St. George" for his programme. "Professor" Anderson, supported by his son and four daughters, with Miss Carlotta Zerbini, put in one night, with "Rob Roy," and was succeeded by Mr. Charles Matthews, who produced for the first time in Bristol, "The Liar." Next Mr. J. L. Toole made his first appearance in Bristol, supported by Mr. Billington, and appearing in "The Weavers," "Dearer than Life," and "Oliver Twist," with a couple of farces. Then followed one of the most popular pantomimes yet presented, "The Field of the Cloth of Gold," being a reproduction of the capital Strand burlesque in its entirety, with the essential harlequinade, tacked on. Miss Jenny Wilmore as Earl Darnley, who became an immense favourite here, Miss Eliza Gordon was Duke of Suffolk; Miss Jane Gordon, Anne Boleyn; and Miss Kate Mandlebert, Le Sieur de Boissy. Henry VIII, Mr. A. Hilton; Francis I of France, Mr. Fosbrooke; Sir Guy the Cripple, Mr. Rosiere; Queen Katherine, Mr. Howell; and Tete de Veau, High Constable of Calais, Mr. Stanley.

Mr. Buckstone, with whom came Mr. Howe, Mrs. Chippendale and others of the Haymarket Theatre Company, and their appearance in Haymarket comedies proved a welcome change. Then Miss Bateman accompanied by Mr. T. Swinbourne, and her sister—Miss Virginia Francis—produced a new play written by the author of "Leah," entitled "Pietra."

A splendid local production of Dion Boucicault's new drama "After Dark," in which Mr. Fred Hastings, specially engaged, made a great hit in the part of Old Tom, followed. The new scenery, by Messrs. George Gordon, Frank Jones and Harford, had not been previously equalled here in drama. "After Dark" was followed by the pioneer comic opera, destined with its successors to supersede the burlesque and extravaganza reign which, so far, had done duty in this line. It was a right good send off too, for I do not remember the "Grand Duchess" with so powerful a cast, embracing as it did, Miss Julia Matthews, Mlle. Albertazzi, Mlle. Esta, and Messrs. J. D. Stoye, Aynsley Cook, Odell, W. H. Narton and Wilford Morgan, with the famous Payne family.

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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Half a dozen characters were thus in the hands of their original Covent Garden exponents. Mr. Sims Reeves, with Miss Ada Jackson, a Clifton soprano, and Mr. Chute, for three performances, "Guy Mannering" and "Rob Roy" being staged.

In June, Miss Kate Saville, Miss Coghlan, Mr. Henry Drayton and Mr. Allerson, brought Boucicault's play "Forbidden Fruit," and in August Mr. Coleman Charles Reade's "Never too late to Mend," with Messrs. Henry Haynes, Henry Sinclair, J. G. Warde and the one and only "Jacky," Mr. Stanislaus Calhaem. It was a fine performance.

MISS LOUISE WILLES.—The stock season of the autumn, 1869, opened with a company especially strong in the ladies engaged, there being Misses Plessy Mordaunt, Bessie Marston, Periera (Mrs. J. H. Slater), Louise Willes and Fanny Bennet, amongst the principals. Of the gentlemen, were Messrs. J. G. Warde, Howell, H. Chippendale, Arnold, Fred-erick Marshall, Hilton and J. H. Slater.

The drama, "Caste and Colour," was the initial item, this being a Chute version of "Le Docteur Noir," and embracing the rising water effect, at that time the sensation at the Queen's, London, in "The Turn of the Tide."

Mr. Charles Dillon followed, producing "Valjean," a version of Hugo's "Les Miserables," and then Mr. Fletcher, with Miss Carlotta Leclercq, who during the fortnight of their engagement produced Wilkie Collins' drama "Black and White." Mr. J. L. Toole introduced us to H. J. Byron's "Dearer than Life" and Dion Boucicault's "Dot," a dramatic version of Dickens' "Cricket on the Hearth."

"Robinson Crusoe" was the pantomime of 1869-70, Miss Louise Periera being cast as Robinson, and Mr. Fred Marshall, Bristol's "call-boy" under the stage management of his father, in the by-gones, taking the palm by his admirable performance of Friday. It had but a brief success and was withdrawn February 12th, its want of popularity greatly due, beyond doubt, to the lamentable accident which had occurred on the night of its production, and in which eighteen lives were lost. The popularity of the two preceding Bristol pantomimes had gathered an unprecedented crowd of theatre patrons to the pit and gallery entrance in which there was, at that time, neither dividing rail nor protective gate. In the rush at the opening of the doors, some of the very foremost fell, and those behind, entirely unconscious of what had happened, quite as unconsciously walked over them. In order to avoid a panic, Mr. Chute gave orders for the performance to proceed, and it was not until they left the building that any member of the audience knew anything of the disaster. That both mentally and financially the management had been dealt a cruel and crushing blow none might doubt, and coming as it did so speedily upon the stress and anxiety of their great venture, I am dis-

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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posed to think that neither Mr. nor Mrs. Chute ever regained their fair outlooks upon life.

Again came Madame Celeste upon the scene, bringing with her a new play written for her by J. Palgrave Simpson, entitled "The Watch Dog of the Walsinghams." As to whether that experienced dramatist had designedly supplied the popular actress with a "tongue-twister" or not, he had done so, as in speaking "the tag," the facial contortions of Madame were extraordinary. "Ze Wass-dog of ze Walzinghams" was not a sentence in which her slightly foreign accent, so charming in the parts of Miami, and other of her staple goods, was proved to advantage.

There was an amusing episode in the staging of this play, Henry Owen, the master stage-carpenter, not caring to put the management to unnecessary expense, having ingeniously made up a scene which he thought might suffice for a night or two's performance, and this was set for the rehearsal.

"Harry Owen," cried Madame, as it met her view, "what you call this?"

"That, Madame, is the Park scene!"

"Ah! ze Park scene! It is what I call a go'dam giblet stew!"

On Monday, February 26th, there was produced Dion Boucicault's latest success, the Irish drama "Arrah-na-Pogue" (Arrah of the Kiss), played at the Royal Princess's upwards of 200 nights, and as "Jean la Poste," upwards of 100 nights in Paris, being the first drama of the English stage to be translated for production there. In Bristol it formed one of the most complete stagings of the times. The scenery, by Messrs. Gordon and Harford, was exceptionally effective, whilst the representation was in truth convincing. Mr. James O'Sullivan as Shaun-the-post, his foil, Mr. Shiel Barry, as Michael Feeny. Col. Bagenal O'Grady ("the O'Grady") was in the hands of Mr. Chute, and I know of no character, certainly if it be not the "Roused Lion," in which he has been seen to such advantage. I have the picture before me now, as rising from the bench in the Justice Hall, his splendid personality in the uniform of a British Colonel, and that mellow ringing voice of his pervading the hall, he exclaimed, "Oh! Major, Major! it's mighty hard for an Irish gentleman to sit here whilst a poor boy is condemned to death, when dignity forbids him to say that he is damn sorry for him." The play ran for four weeks, until a previously arranged return of Barry Sullivan necessitated its withdrawal, but it was revived for the Whitsuntide holidays, and this closed the spring season of 1870.

Perhaps it is as well to acknowledge that the success or otherwise of this important production was one of more than passing interest to the management, for as the weeks had slipped by it had become increasingly evident that the deterrent effect of the Boxing-night's disaster would not readily disappear.

There were the customary benefits, a complimentary night by the



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## The Bristol Stage

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Clifton Amateurs to Mr. Chute, and a bespeak by Col. H. E. Weare, C.B., and the officers of the 50th Regt. (Queen's Own), then stationed at Horfield Barracks, from whence came the fine band of the regiment to assist. Mlle. H. Schneider, with her French company, gave one performance of each of Offenbach's two operas, "La Grande Duchesse" and "Orphee aux Enfers," and then came Whitsuntide, with, as already stated, "Arrah-Na-Pogue" revived.

The autumn season commenced on August 29th with that delightful *artiste* Mlle. Beatrice, who brought with her Misses Sophie Young, Emmie D'Este, A. Markham, etc., and Messrs. H. Sinclair, Horace Wigan, F. Harvey, etc. "Frou-Frou" was first introduced to Bristol players, and during her twelve nights' engagement "Marie Antoinette" and "Marie Stuart." Henry J. Byron, in "Blow for Blow," "Prompter's Box," and "Lancashire Lass," occupied the succeeding twelve nights, and then a week with Miss Cleveland—back from Australia—and three nights of Mr. Sothern, accompanied by Miss Amy Roselle, producing for the first time on any stage T. W. Robertson's comedy "Birth"; at its best, *un success d'estime*.

The following attraction offered by the management was Mr. H. J. Byron, the popular and versatile author, who during twelve nights appeared in a couple of his own plays, one of which, "An English Gentleman," had not previously faced the footlights. The author was accompanied by Mr. J. D. Beveridge and Miss Nellie Joy.

J. L. Toole followed. The features of the engagement being "Uncle Dick's Darling" and "Dearer than Life," he accentuated the immense popularity of his predecessor, H. J. Byron, as an author.

For the production of "Little Em'ly" Mr. G. F. Rowe had been engaged, Miss Rose Lisle played Little Em'ly and Miss Fanny Robertson, Betsy Trotwood.

The pantomime was on the subject of the "Forty Thieves," and was well produced, the majority of the scenery being by Messrs. Harford and Mark Barraud, the latter of whom had now "joined up" as local artist, but Messrs. Gordon and Frank Jones were also in some evidence. Miss Louise Willes as Morgiana and Miss Susan Rignold as the princess, proved early favourites; Abdallah being played by Miss Louise Pieriera. The pantomime, in its entirety, ran to February 18th, 1871, and bereft of the harlequinade, for three nights in the ensuing week, but Miss Pieriera was not an ideal pantomime boy.

The Easter attraction was Mr. W. H. Vernon in "The Will and the Way," and "Faust and Marguerite," and the return of this Bristol-born favourite as a "special engagement" was recognized in an unmistakable welcome from all parts of the house. On the Friday, Miss Bateman appeared as "Leah," Rudolph, Mr. W. H. Vernon; and on the following Monday, for his benefit, "The Marble Heart" was the premier item.

During the first three nights of the Whitsun week "A Message from

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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the Sea" held the boards; but on the Saturday, May 13th, the Vaudeville Theatre Company appeared in "The Two Roses," the following being the cast:—

Jack Wyatt, Mr. W. H. Montague; Caleb Deecie, Mr. C. W. Garthorne; Digby Grant, Esq., Mr. Henry Irving; Our Mr. Jenkins, Mr. George Honey; Mr. Furnival, Mr. W. H. Stephens; Lottie, Miss Amy Fawcitt; Ida, Miss Louise Claire; Mrs. Jenkins, Miss Billings; Mrs. Cupps, Miss Hertz.

A farce, never before performed, entitled "A Fearful Fog," by F. Hay, preceded the successful comedy. The engagement was for one night only, the company being *en route* for Ireland, but on its return therefrom they took up the thread without intervention, save that of time, for a most successful further six performances.

## CHAPTER XI

A.D. 1871

ON August 14th, 1871, Miss Bateman opened a six nights' campaign with "Mary Warner," a new play written for her by Tom Taylor, the well-known author of the "Ticket-of-Leave-Man." Mr. W. H. Vernon was George Warner; Mr. Frank Barsby, Bob Levitt; and Miss Virginia Francis, Milly Rigg. Barry Sullivan followed, and in that gifted young citizen-actor, Mr. Walter Fisher, found in "Hamlet" an excellent Laertes, Malcolm in "Macbeth," and in "Richard III" Sir William Brandon. In the first-named tragedy, Mr. Chute gave "his chance" also to another well-known Bristolian, long amongst the front rank of "general utility" under his management, Mr. Osgood being cast for the character of Horatio, and acquitting himself entirely to the satisfaction of both Mr. Chute and Mr. Barry Sullivan. Mr. Osgood was a chimney sweep, and with a prosperous business in the vicinity of Redland Green, but his love was for the stage, and his ambition to become an actor! As an elocutionist, Mr. Osgood was quite entitled to such dreams, for besides giving evidence of this in an evening of popular readings, arranged by him at the Broadmead Rooms, I have seen him play Osric and Catesby capitally. One drawback, however, he had, and that, for a young aspirant to the mantle of Rossius a fatal one, his voice, being best described perhaps as ultra-woolly. The following week of Mr. Barry Sullivan's engagement, Mr. J. F. Cathcart was Laertes; Mr. Walter Fisher, Horatio; and Mr. Osgood, Marcellus; such was the "school" which sent forward on their career so many of our leading stage exponents.

Mr. H. Leslie sent us a remarkably fine Operatic Company for the performance of Offenbach's "Princess of Trebizonde," amongst the principals being Misses Mabel Brent, Julia St. George, Louie Henri, and as "Manola, the Strong Woman of the Wilderness," Miss Carrie Braham. Mr. H. Bracy was Tremolini; Cabriola, Mr. Edward Chessman; and Dr. Spreadrap, Mr. A. Walmsley; and amidst the greatest tokens of success the twelve nights proved none too many for comic-opera patrons.

Mr. J. Clarke, who had scored a success at the Prince of Wales Theatre, produced his *pièce de résistance*, Byron's comedy "Ours," his old favourite "The Bonny Fishwife," and for his benefit "Sairy Gamp," in which latter piece Mr. Fosbrooke played Betsy Prig. Mr. Clarke was further supported by Miss Rachel Sanger.



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## The Bristol Stage

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That prolific playwright and king of representatives of the "Bhoys of Clarney," Mr. Dion Boucicault, together with Mrs. Boucicault, came for six nights, and Mr. Chute wisely engaged Mr. Shiel Barry to resume his part of Michael Feeny, and upon the occasion of the benefit to appear as Danny Man. What Mr. Boucicault thought of this support can be fairly estimated from the fact that he took Mr. Shiel Barry away with him and retained his services throughout the tour which he was then making.

Not a few consistent playgoers are apt to associate the name of Dion Boucicault with his phenomenal successes, the "Colleen Bawn," "Arrah-na-Pogue," "The Octoroon," etc., and think that there the story ends. Save, perhaps, Mr. H. J. Byron—and as to which of these comes first I am not sure—no dramatic author has placed upon the stage so many successful works. I cannot pretend to remember all of these, but I can, in addition to the foregoing, mention "London Assurance," "Louis XI," "Love in a Maze," "The Irish Heiress," "Woman," "Night and Morning," "Don Cæsar de Bazan," "Hunted Down," "The Long Strike," "Janet Pride," "The Willow Copse," "Dot," "Rip Van Winkle," "The Vampire," "Streets of London," "After Dark," and "The Shaugraun," most of which have been seen in Bristol, whilst others of less enduring popularity, which I know to exist, do not readily suggest their titles to my mind.

Mr. Joseph Eldred was the next attraction, bringing "Nell," in which he impersonated Quilp; "Little Em'ly," he playing Micawber, "Aurora Floyd" and Andrew Halliday's "The Great City." "Uncle Tom" followed, Mr. Charles Arnold in the title rôle proving himself the best exponent of the character since Mr. Voltaire.

An excellent and popular romantic actor of the time—one whose name has been made increasingly familiar by reason of the intrepid aeroplane exploits of his son Robert (also by profession an actor) during the great "World War"—Mr. Henry Loraine, introduced to a Bristol audience an attractive melodrama, "The Face in the Moonlight," which was warmly received. During his visit Mr. Kirkman Hodson, M.P., gave a bespeak, and before an exceedingly large audience Mr. Loraine appeared as "Don Cæsar de Bazan." Temp. Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Loraine, whilst trying during the summer of 1918, and when flying at a height of 5,000 feet to stop a couple of Hun bullets, was made a cripple, but hoped to again "carry on" before returning to the stage.

The Christmas annual was on the subject of "Dick Whittington and his Cat." It was at this point in his theatrical experience that Mr. Chute first felt acutely the new vogue of the "middleman" in the dramatic world. So far, the method of securing an engagement had been for the actor to "write in" to the desired manager and, in the case of Bristol at any rate, such applications involved no loss of dignity to the writers; whilst the manager, king in his own castle, avoided the worry and unpleasantness of addressing those *artistes* who were no longer at liberty, or

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## The Bristol Stage

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were not desirous of accepting the offer made. In all that touched the privileges of either manager or actor, Mr. Chute was intensely conservative, and the intervention of the "agent" in no way appealed to him as being either necessary or desirable. His last two Christmas productions had unquestionably suffered considerably from the absence of such pantomime "principal boys" as he had never previously failed to secure by the "write in" method, and it was nothing but a last moment necessity that had at length driven him into the arms of the "theatrical agent!" Of course the basket had already been well picked over, and it was purely a matter of Hobson's choice that gave him his Dick Whittington. How well I remember his first appreciation of what he was in for, when with what appeared to suggest the conscious pride of excellence, the lady in such a pronounced nasal twang of Cockneydom that you could cut it with a knife, sang the opening number :—

"I had a dream, a happy dream,  
I dreamt I was Lord Mayor."

It was a shock! But always the philosopher, if, at times, the cynic, he was pointing out to me, and that with quite an unaccustomed finality of reasoning and with apparent enthusiasm, that she *was* Dick Whittington, and that the performance (I don't know whether on that occasion he had seen it further) was the only correct and classical impersonation of the part that he had ever witnessed. "Just think," he said, "Dick Whittington, in spite of the artistic costume in which we disclose him, was a boy of the lower order, a *gamin*, born and bred within the sound of Bow Bells, and carries the whole of his spare wardrobe in a pocket-handkerchief perched on a stick! Isn't that the *exact* style in which he should proclaim his joy? I tell you, it is great!" But I scented the volcano that lay beneath the gently rumbling sounds.

Mr. and Mrs. Rousby, in a twelve nights' engagement produced on February 19th Tom Taylor's "Twixt Axe and Crown." Easter was rendered exceptionally attractive by the presentation of Mr. Charles Rice's fine production "Amy Robsart." Mr. Rice undertook the character of Mike Lambourne, the best effort which I associate with his name. The play, with its glittering armour, proved a great draw, and was continued during the following week.

On May 3rd the Bristol Histrionic Club gave a performance on behalf of the widow and children of the late Mr. Dobbins, the many years' theatre treasurer, presenting "Extremes." "Childeric," the famous opera bouffe, was staged at the King Street Theatre, that popular artiste Miss Augusta Thompson proving a star of no little brilliance. The company shifting its quarters to the New Theatre on the 21st, when, taking advantage of the excellent musical combination, Mr. Chute announced his annual benefit, and appeared as Charles XII of Sweden.

Mr. Charles, with Miss Annie Manners and Mr. Forrest Knowles, gave

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## The Bristol Stage

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two performances of "Coriolanus," the week being completed with Mr. Douglass' Royal Standard Company, presenting the drama "For Sale" from that theatre.

In early June, Mr. John Hollingshead sent his Gaiety company of *bouffe artistes*, exponents of Offenbach's most attractive works, "Grand Duchess," "La Belle Helene," and "Barbe Bleue," and so popular did these works prove, that the original six nights' stay was extended throughout the following week. Of the principals were, Misses Julia Matthews, Emily Muir and Alice Cook, with Messrs. J. D. Stoyke, Furneau Cook, Carlton, H. Collier and E. D. Beverley, the last named being an ideal Fritz in appearance, and possessed of an exceptionally fine tenor voice. Until the lure of the stage captured him, Mr. — (I forget his family name) had been a schoolmaster in Beverley, hence the attractive *nom de théâtre*. The majority of the audiences witnessing the "Grand Duchess" were puzzled at the obvious amusement of some few amongst themselves, and especially of members of the company on the stage, when the Grand Duchess, inquiring of her disgraced commander-in-chief what position he would prefer to occupy, Fritz replies, "I should like to be a school-master!"

In July Mr. J. L. Toole brought a full company, producing during the week H. J. Byron's dramas, "Uncle Dick's Darling" and "Dearer than Life," as the chief items of the visit, and then on August 26th, in order that A.D. 1872 might not get dramatically lethargic, Mlle. Beatrice, the ever-increasingly welcome *comédienne*, arrived on a six nights' visit, bringing with her the entire Olympic company, which then included Mr. William Rignold, and producing "Our Friends" (*Nos Intimes*), "Broken Ties," etc.

"Amy Robsart" (Chas. Rice's production), and Joseph Eldred with "Sleigh Bells," followed by "Little Amy Robsart," Haliday's burlesque, were next upon the list, Eldred having with him Misses Augusta Thompson, Angelina Claude, Mr. Joseph Paulton, Mr. E. W. Royce, etc., this being Eldred's finest combination of *bouffe artistes*.

The season which, with "Lost in London" and Byron's burlesque "Don Giovanni," commenced on September 23rd, revealed what was practically a new stock company, but which—as in the two or three previous substitutions—could not be regarded as a welcome change in the dramatic *personnel*, and the effect of this was increasingly evidenced in the decrease of patronage, other than upon exceptional occasions. There was a goodly assembly on the 27th inst., that being the night of the bespeak of the Mayor and Mayoress, Mr. and Mrs. Proctor Baker.

Mr. and Mrs. Rousby returned, and were followed by Mr. Talbot, a Scotch tragedian, who in Macklin's "Man of the World," and also in "King o' Scots," gave his most attractive programmes. "After Dark" was succeeded by Mr. James Bennett and Tom Swinbourne, with something approaching a change in the selection of Shakespearean plays,



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## *The Bristol Stage*

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"Julius Cæsar," "Henry IV" and "King John" being of the category. The last-named gem of the Bard proved intensely popular, King John being impersonated by Bennett, Faulconbridge by Swinbourne, Hubert, Mr. Henry Walton; and Prince Arthur, by Miss Kate Mandlebert, the two last-named *artistes* in that touching scene of the fourth act, drawing forth a measure of applause seldom bestowed on one's local representatives when supporters of traditional "stars"!

Miss Henrietta Hodson had a warm welcome as Ariel in the "Tempest," whilst in a burlesque version of "The Stranger" as Mrs. Haller (her original character), some lines, easily adapted by those who knew the circumstances, to her matrimonial infelicity, inspiring unmistakable evidences of sympathy.

The old round of revivals followed, with more or less success, the company of the season now comprising Misses Fanny Enson, E. Rudd, Armitage, Kate Newton, and Kate Mandlebert; Messrs. George Stretton, Henry Walton, Longmore, Charles Arnold, Kelly Robertson, R. Cowell, Scudamore and Fosbrooke.

Three nights of an Italian Opera Company, comprising Mesdames Trevelli-Bettini, Titiens, Marimon, and Baunmeister, Signors Bettini, Foli, Tombesi, and Renaldini. The operas were "Norma," Flotow's "Martha," and Bellini's "Sonambula," Signor Li Calsi being the conductor.

The pantomime of 1872-3 was founded on the subject of "Tom Thumb," Miss Gerty Mills, yclept "the Infant Sappho" (a title I thought the distinguishing mark of Miss Louisa Vinning), appearing in the name part, but the revived glories of the Christmas annual in Bristol were certainly not yet!

It will thus be seen that the available repertoire of attractive plays at the disposal of a stock season's manager was of painfully limited dimensions, whilst of travelling "stars" very few indeed continued conspicuous in Bristol's dramatic firmament, the majority of whom, owing to their lack-lustre constitution, proving to be of other than a meteoric character. Neither can it be claimed that dramatic authorship received many recruits to its ranks, H. J. Byron, Dion Boucicault, Tom Taylor, Andrew Halliday and Tom Robertson, all old timers, being mostly responsible for the holding of the fort.

Mr. Edmund Falconer came with his Princess's drama, "Eileen Oge," and on March 24th the vast ballet production "Babil and Bijou," from Covent Garden, took possession of the boards, whilst lovers of the more dramatic fare, had, at the Theatre Royal, Mr. George Rignold in his great London success, "Amos Clark," the performance of which was continued during the following week at the Park Row house.

Monday, May 5th, introduced Mr. Wybert Reeve and company, from the Olympic, in the "Woman in White," this being an engagement which stood out, for the representation throughout was of a very con-

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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vincing order. Mr. Wybert Reeve made a fine Count Fosco, Mr. E. S. Willard a splendid Walter Hartwright, Miss Eliza Saville, a striking Marion Halcombe, and Miss Ellen Meybrick a perfectly alluring Woman in White. Wilkie Collins was about now "entirely the cult," and that the following week should be devoted to Miss Marie Wilton's Company in "Man and Wife" was quite that which might have been hoped for, and beyond all question the performance proved as delightful as did that which had preceded it. The representation of Geoffrey Delamayn was in the hands of Mr. Charles Wyndham, and those who have only seen Sir Charles in those lighter works to which he owed his later popularity, would hardly conceive how great was his impersonation of the sodden aristocrat of Wilkie Collins' novel. A great performance in this production of *Man and Wife* was that of Miss Ada Dias as Anne Silvester, the heroine, and Miss Blanche Wilton. Messrs. Charles Collette, H. B. Conway and others were all successfully cast.

It is remarkable how many lights of the histrionic world settle into a line of characters foreign to that which would apparently be their predestination, or which constituted their desire. "Johnny" Toole often vowed, although perhaps not seriously, that his ambition was to play Othello or Macbeth, and certainly he was to my mind more at home in touches of pathos, such as Caleb Plummer, Uncle Dick, etc., than in more intensely humorous characters or those intended to be such, and upon which his reputation was mainly built.

Offenbach's opera, "*La Perichole*," with Mr. E. Beverley in the name part, was performed here for the first time.

## CHAPTER XII

A.D. 1873

HENRY IRVING, under the Bateman regime, had by now established his early Lyceum reputation, and much interest surrounded his opening the autumn season here with W. G. Wills' picturesque play "Charles I." Although in some quarters voted "thin," I own to being an admirer of this work, as also of Irving's dignified yet sympathetic performance as the unfortunate monarch. Miss Isabel Bateman played Queen Henrietta, Mr. H. Forrester being Cromwell and E. F. Edgar Lord Moray. "The Bells" was also presented for a couple of nights, Irving without the "Bells" being, at this time, unthinkable.

Miss Julia Matthews and Mr. J. D. Stoye had a ten nights' run with "Kissi-Kissi," H.I.M. the Padishah Doo Deen being amongst the very best of the Stoye impersonations. The first week was interrupted on the Thursday and Saturday by Madame Ristori, the world-renowned *tragedienne*, the lady appearing on the former occasion as Mary Stuart, and on the Saturday as Queen Elizabeth, the prices of admission, of course raised, being to stalls, 6s.; dress circle, 5s.; and so on, down to 1s. gallery.

Tom Taylor's company visited Bristol next, with "Arkwright's Wife" and "Vesta's Temple," very effectively represented by Misses Phillie Hill and A. M. Kelly, Messrs. Charles Kelly, Flockton, Henry, Ferrand, etc. Miss Henrietta Hodson brought "Old London," a drama, certainly not of her best attractions, but "The Tempest" as also "The Stranger," burlesque, were revived in support of the engagement.

Miss Marie Lytton's "Happy Land" company, consisting of Messrs. F. Dewar, George Rignold, Edgar Bruce and C. Steyne, together with Miss Kate Bishop, Miss Rose Egan, Misses Sylvia Hodson, Phoebe Don, etc., proved quite a hit.

It was a merry skit (by the author's permission) upon W. S. Gilbert's "Wicked World." In London, when produced at the Court Theatre, the three principals, of whom Mr. Walter Fisher was chief, were made up as the famous politicians, Gladstone, Bobby Lowe and Professor Ayrton, and sang:—

"For we are three most popular men,  
And we'd like to see who'll turn us out!"



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## *The Bristol Stage*

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The Lord Chamberlain quickly vetoed the "make-up," so that much of the point of the humorous skit was lost, except to those who, knowing the details, drew on their imagination. During this week the New Theatre Company performed "The Octoroon" at "The Old!" in King Street. Mr. and Mrs. Bandmann, in a cycle of plays, in one only of which, "Narcisse," was he, to my mind, seen to advantage.

Mr. Charles Matthews next occupied the stage, and needless to state met with an enthusiastic reception. Yet how much greater would the laughter and applause which fell upon his ears have been had the audience been in possession of the details of the delightful little comedy which had preceded his appearance on the Monday evening, and as disclosed in the following amusing letter:—

"BELLE VUE MANSIONS, BRIGHTON,  
"August 6th, 1873."

"MY DEAR TOOLE,—

"Were you ever in a mess? If you never were I can explain it to you, having been in several; indeed, I don't mind confessing to you that I am in one now, and, strange to say, you are perhaps the only man who can get me out of it. You need not button up your pockets, it isn't a pecuniary one. Only fancy! after thirty years' practice and experience I have made a mistake in my dates, and for the first time in my life find myself engaged to two managers at the same time. Now they say a man cannot serve two masters, but I CAN if they will come one after the other, only one at a time, one down, t'other come on; but to play at Bristol and the Gaiety on the same night (and keep it up for a week), I don't see my way to accomplish. In a moment of enthusiasm I engaged to begin with Chute on September 29th, and I had scarcely done so when Hollingshead reminded me that I was booked to begin with him on that date, and that it could not be altered. Conceive my dismay. Chute holds fast—'can't be altered'—so does Hollingshead—'can't be altered.' Now, Toole—*dear* Toole, *BELOVED* Toole—can't you stay a week longer at the Gaiety? CAN'T you let me begin there on Monday, October 6th (as I thought I did), and get me out of my dilemma? Can't you make this sacrifice to friendship and put three or four hundred more into your pocket? Virtue is not its own reward, but an extra week of fine business is. Now, Toole, adored Tooley—the best of men—first of comedians—most amiable of your sex—burst into tears—throw your arms and sob out, 'Do with me as thou wilt—play me another week—pay me another three hundred and be happy.' Breathless with anxiety, yet swelling with hope, I must await your answer. Pity the sorrows of a poor old man and even telegraph 'Yes', rather than keep me in suspense. What's a week to an able-bodied low comedian? Child's play! Why, you'll be wanting to throw in morning performances as well to keep you from rusting. It

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## The Bristol Stage

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really is a *chance* for you—avail yourself of it and bless me, and I'll bless *you*, and Hollingshead will bless us both, and Chute will bless us all.

"With my intermediate blessing, ever faithfully yours,

"C. J. MATHEWS."

The Carl Rosa Opera Company followed on October 6th, 1873, this being the first visit of the renowned combination to our city. The operas produced on this occasion were "*Maritana*," "*Faust*," "*Don Giovanni*," "*Il Trovatore*," "*Fra Diavolo*," and the "*Bohemian Girl*." The Company was a fairly good one, the *prime donne* being Madame Vaneri, and Misses Rose Hersee and Blanche Cole, with Misses Lucy Franklin and Catherine Lewis, contralti. The tenors, Messrs. J. Chatterson and Wm. Castle, and bassi Messrs. Aynsley Cook, Arthur Stevens and S. C. Campbell. Mr. Carl Rosa conducted in person, and it was easy to appreciate the master hand that had done so much with the material at his disposal, as also to anticipate some of that which was to come, under his direction.

Miss Bateman brought with her Mr. E. H. Brooke, a fine actor, and others, and on December 8th commenced a series of four performances by Her Majesty's Theatre Italian Opera Company, and although one or two of the great "stars" were beyond their prime, the combination was a famous one. There were Mesdames Titiens. Sinico, Bauermeister, Trebelli-Bettini and Marie Roze, the last named making her earliest appearance here as Margherita in "*Faust*," whilst amongst the gentlemen were Signori Urio, Rinaldi, Fabrini, Tito Sterbini, Campobello, Giulio Perkin, Agnesi, etc. "*Lucrezia Borgia*," "*Faust*," "*Don Giovanni*" and "*Il Trovatore*" were the works selected and Signor Li Calsi was the conductor.

Miss Ada Cavendish appeared as Mercy Merrick in Wilkie Collins' play "*The New Magdalen*," a part which she had for 200 nights filled with enormous success at the Royal Olympic, and which she was destined to play amidst equal plaudits for several hundreds of nights further, and that throughout the Kingdom. Mr. R. Markby was the Julian Gray. "*Valentine and Orson*," as its production had done in the old days, promised to revive the waning popularity of pantomime. The management had realized that all was not well with recent attempts in this direction, and a Christmas annual possessed of far greater scenic beauty than had previously been essayed here on such occasions, was supported by an all-round cast of principals, more or less reminiscent of earlier triumphs, and it met with its reward! Valentine was enacted by Miss Joanna Blake (Mrs. Alexander), Orson by Mr. Henry Walton, the leading light comedian of the dramatic company, whilst other characters were represented by Misses Florence Edgar, Nellie Lingham, Kate Mandlebert, A. Page, and Ellen Mayne; Messrs. Scudamore, Tapping, Henry H. Vincent, Fosbrooke, Cowell, and Edward Compton. The clown was Mr. A. F. Forrest. But so long as the harlequinade continued to be a

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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leading factor in pantomime, the transformation scene, the time-honoured introduction to the Christmas fooling, would hold its sway, and set a hall-mark upon all that followed and, at times, upon much which had preceded it. There was the opportunity for scenic ingenuity. It was in this respect that the pantomime of 1873-4, when seen, exacted long absent admiration. "The Nativity of Venus" supplied the subject, the story as disclosed being effectively told by Mr. C. Brew, from whose studio Mr. Chute had acquired it. "Valentine and Orson" ran until the last week of the spring season. Mr. George Chapman, musical conductor, announced a benefit, producing "Masks and Faces," his sister-in-law, Bristol's old favourite, Miss Mandlebert, coming from her London engagement in order to sustain the character of Peg Woffington. The play was followed by a musical interlude, in the course of which the Bands of the 1st Gloucestershire Artillery, and the 1st Gloucestershire Rifle Volunteers, of the latter of which Mr. George Chapman was band-master, took part. The benefit house was a "bumper"!

Not all benefits, however, have their paths too liberally strewn with milk and honey, for Mr. George Chapman, his son and our present conductor at the Prince's, relates how some years since, when occupying a similar position at the Empire, Hanley, he was induced to take a benefit! What more natural or more provident than that he should map out the channels into which this anticipated accession to the season's revenue should flow, and what more natural than that a visit to the paternal roof and the scene of his early joys should occupy a conspicuous position in the programme? In the result, he felt exceedingly thankful that the "benefit" left him *minus* £1 13s. 4d. only of his hard earned salary. Such is life!

Although the foregoing episode was of somewhat remote origin, the concluding act of the drama as indicated in the following correspondence was delightfully local:—

"DEAR FATHER,—

"Last night I took my benefit. Please send me ten pounds.

"Your affectionate son,

"GEORGE."

"DEAR GEORGE,—

"Herewith cheque for £10. . Don't take another benefit, I cannot afford it.

"DAD."

There was an excellent company (Mrs. W. H. Liston's) producing "La Fille de Madame Angot," Mlle. Blanche Tersi, Miss Pattie Laverne, with Messrs. John Grantham and Loredan amongst the principals, and



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## *The Bristol Stage*

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then the Albery Company charmed with "The Two Roses," "Forgiven," and "Apple Blossoms," Miss Susan Rignold, Miss May Holt and Miss Jenny Fountain appearing with Messrs. Flockton, G. S. Titheradge, C. W. Garthorne, E. Chessman and W. Walmsley—an excellent combination.

On May 25th, 1874, that fine old actor, Mr. Compton, whose son, Mr. Edward Compton, had for some time been earning his spurs under the Bristol management, commenced a brief engagement with comedies of the grade so successfully associated both with his career and with the Haymarket Theatre. The veteran comedian was accompanied by several *artistes* of standing—the which is not always synonymous of undoubted merit—notably Miss Kate Hodson, Miss Stansfield and Mrs. F. B. Egan, Mr. Chas. Vadenhoff, Mr. J. A. Phillips and Mr. Warren. "Paul Pry," "Heir at Law," etc., were performed during the first four nights, and on Thursday, 28th, Mr. Chute taking advantage of his old friend's presence, announced his annual benefit. Shakespeare's play "Twelfth Night" was selected for the occasion, Mr. Compton enacting the part of the Clown, Mr. Chute that of Sir Toby, and Miss Madge Robertson—coming from the Haymarket Theatre to support her old manager—as Olivia. The event was exceptionally successful, and the two remaining nights of the engagement exceedingly well patronized.

In October Miss Bella Murdoch joined the company, her husband, Mr. George Titheradge, having for some time been principal light comedian here. "East Lynne" was her opening play, the after-piece being "Domestic Economy," in which Mr. Fosbrooke was, to my mind, always seen at his best. He had a glorious Mrs. Grumley, this time, the character being admirably acted by Miss Eliza Rudd.

For his pantomime of 1874-5, Mr. Chute on Christmas Eve produced Charles Rice's "Red Riding Hood, and Little Bo Peep," which, owing mainly to the introduction upon the Covent Garden stage of a perfectly tractable flock of sheep, had set all the nation a-talking, and had experienced a phenomenal run there at the previous Christmas. Beyond the "ba-lambs," however, the pantomime was one of the best I remember, the two stories being admirably dove-tailed, and that its excellence was recognised here was indicated years later when it was again staged by Messrs. George and James Macready Chute. On the present occasion it was presented in a charming manner, a vast amount of new scenery being provided by Mr. Mark Barraud, whilst that of the "Glow Worm Dell," by Messrs. Gordon and Harford, proved one of the most delightful "sets" imaginable. Red Riding Hood was impersonated by Miss Katie Brown, and Bo Peep, her sister, by Miss Willa Brown, their performance leaving little, if anything, to be desired. In the harlequinade the Clown was Mr. Harry Wright, and amongst the scenes employed were views of the Old and the New Railway Stations, Bristol.

The production of Tom Taylor's "Clancarty," with Miss Louise

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## The Bristol Stage

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Willes, fresh from her Olympic Theatre triumph of over 200 nights as Lady Clancarty, was exceedingly popular. Our old favourite was supported by Mr. Charles Barrington as Lord Clancarty, Miss Florence Terry as Lady Betty Noel, Mr. David Honeysett, Mr. A. Lindsay and the local company. "The Two Orphans" followed.

On May 3rd Henry J. Byron's masterpiece "Our Boys," then in the full tide of success at the Vaudeville, London, was presented. The company consisted of Messrs. Reginald Moore, R. S. Boleyn, E. W. Garden and R. W. Younge, the ladies being Mrs. E. B. Egan and Miss Laura Lendon, Louise Vernon and Fanny Brough. The proprietor of the phenomenally successful venture being Mr. William Duck—"Duck of Bath," as he customarily introduced himself, evincing surprise upon discovering that fame had not preceded him.

Under the patronage of Col. Taylor and officers of the 1st Gloucestershire Rifle Volunteers, Mr. George R. Chapman again took a benefit, the regimental band, of which he was still bandmaster, being in attendance. Miss Kate Mandlebert (Mrs. George R. Chapman) recited Collins' "Ode on the Passions," and Miss (Lizzie) Mandlebert, who again came from London, gave a powerful rendering of the part of Marie de Fontanges, in "Plot and Passion."

The Standard Theatre Company in "Rank and Fame," and then came Mr. and Mrs. Billington with Miss Ellen Meyrick, and Miss Florence Cowell, in Paul Meritt's pretty plays "Rough and Ready" and "Olive Branch." Mrs. Billington also recited Arthur Mathison's "Plimsoll" poem, "Coffin Ships." The following week the company was to be seen at the Old Theatre Royal.

On September 6th there was in Park Row the enormous attraction of Mr. J. K. Emmet, in "Fritz," with his haunting songs "Schneider, how you was," "Peek-a-Boo," "Go to Sleep my Baby" and "Sweet Violets." The six performances proved far and away too few for the would-be patrons, and later Mr. Emmet returned.

A fortnight of opera, under the direction of Mrs. W. H. Liston, and conducted by Mr. John Crook, came next, Offenbach's latest contribution to the musical world, "Girofle-Girofla" opening the ball, and "La Fille de Madame Angot" following. It was a good company, embracing the Misses Rebecca Isaacs, Catherine Lewis, Terese Cummings, and Rose Norris, and Messrs. Knight Aston, Henri Corri, R. Cummings and Mat Robson.

Mr. Chute produced "Faithful Heart," my first play, but written under my *nom de theatre* "Rennie Palgrave." Mrs. Rousby followed in a round of plays, and on her departure the run of "Faithful Heart" was resumed.

Miss Wallis came, supported by Mr. Frank Clements, fulfilling a successful twelve nights' engagement, Miss Willis, on one occasion, reciting Tennyson's "Charge of the Light Brigade." "Nicholas

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## The Bristol Stage

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Nickleby " was next produced, and there were several revivals, but although there were a number of members of the company, mostly with Bristol residential associations, who proved most valuable in their respective lines of business, the "lead" was no longer in the hands of the excellent exponents to which playgoers here had become accustomed, and for which, at the New Theatre, at any rate, they looked!

There were three nights of Italian Opera from Her Majesty's Theatre, the combination of *artistes* appearing being the most attractive then extant. On Thursday Donizetti's "Lucia de Lammermoor" was produced, with Mlle. Elena Varesi in the title rôle, and Signor Brignoli, Edgardo, and on Saturday, Verdi's "Rigoletto," with Signor Del Pucute, whilst the Friday evening was devoted to Gounod's "Faust," Signori Gillandi and Castlemary making their first appearances as Faust and Mephistopheles respectively, Galazzi as Valentine and Costa as Wagner with Madame Demeric-Lablache, Marta, Madame Trebelli-Bettini, Siebel and Madame Christine-Nilsson making her first appearance here, enacting the character of Margherita. The treasury receipts on this occasion (upwards of £500) establishing a record.

The subject selected for the Christmas pantomime was "Little Cinderella," represented by Miss Emma Ritta. Produced on Christmas Eve it ran until February 23rd, 1876.

Mr. Charles Matthews, back from his tour in India, met with quite an enthusiastic reception, his appearance here as Adonis Evergreen, "My Awful Dad," evoking torrents of applause. Mr. and Mrs. Charles Matthews left Calcutta on January 17th, and for one week previous to his return to the Gaiety at Easter, opened at the New Theatre Royal, Park Row, on February 28th. The *Era* of the time remarked, "An actor who can play in India in January and in England in February, may certainly be numbered among *the Wonders of the world!*"

"Drink" being the problem of the day, Mr. Chute produced a drama founded on Cruikshank's famous picture and entitled "The Bottle." The company of these times consisted of Misses Amy Burnette, Louise Stanhope, Lorymer, Armytage, Emmerson (Mrs. Luigi Lablache) and E. Rudd, with Messrs. J. F. Lewis (Luigi Lablache), Julian Cross, Wyke Moors, Fosbrooke, Chas. Cooper and Russell Crauford. Mr. Compton appeared as Maurvorm, in the "Hypocrite," and then a complimentary benefit to Mr. Chute, who was seen with Mr. Compton in the "Poor Gentleman," and with his son, Mr. George Macready Chute—who made his first professional appearance on the stage—in "Box and Cox," the cast being announced as follows: Box, a Journeyman Printer, Chute, Senior; Cox, a Journeyman Hatter, Chute, Junior; whilst the headline proclaimed "The old stager and the young stager appear together."

Miss Helen Barry and Mr. Harry St. Maur were here for a week, "Led Astray" being the chief item, whilst for Easter there was a production of Jean Valjean ("The Atonement"), Mr. George Titheradge returning



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## *The Bristol Stage*

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for the lead. Signor Campobello next brought a powerful Italian Opera Company, headed by his wife Madame Campobello-Sinico, performing "Maritana," "Nozze di Figaro," and Weber's "Der Freyschutz," Signor Li Calsi conducted.

## CHAPTER XIII

A.D. 1876

**A**FTER a week with Mr. J. L. Toole's company, including Miss Rose Saker, and producing "Tottles," Mr. Alexander Henderson sent us the Lydia Thompson Company, which made a great splash, such a galaxy of humorous talent not being seen every day. In addition to the popular comedienne there were the Misses Rachel Sanger, Topsy Venn, Ella Chapman, Violet Cameron, D'Aguillar, Alice Grey, and other ladies, the male department being represented by such actors as Messrs. Lionel Brough, Philip Day, Willie Edouin, etc. The fare during the twelve nights consisted of "Blue Beard" and "Piff-Paff."

When Mr. Alexander Henderson, with a selected company, visited the U.S. a New York journalist, coarsely spoke of the combination as that of "the shovel-nose shark from the sea of vice, with his yellow-hair scrofula from the slums of London." That Miss Lydia Thompson (Mrs. Alexander Henderson) whipped him for his pains will occasion no surprise, but, by way of advertisement, I presume, the journalist was the first to announce the fact. Employing extra heavy type for the purpose, "— cowed" was the sensational head-line to a relation of the incident.

Miss Heath, in W. G. Wills's "Jane Shore" and "East Lynne," then a fortnight with Miss Ada Cavendish, Mr. Leonard Boyne and Mr. E. D. Lyons. Both "New Magdalen" and "Miss Gwilt" were staged, the engagement being succeeded by a very fine production of "Sardanapalus," the lines of the King of Nineveh being most poetically spoken by Mr. Arthur Darley.

Next came Madame Selina Dolaro, Edward D. Beverley and company, Mr. E. Goossens being the conductor, with "Grand Duchess" and "La Fille de Madame Angot" occupying the bill. On Saturday, December 23rd, 1876, the pantomime "The Babes in the Wood" was produced, Mr. E. D. Lyons, specially engaged as producer, undertaking the part of Rinaldo, the chief ruffian. In his transformation scene, "The Children's Dream of Fairy Land," Mr. Mark Barraud was ahead of his previous efforts. He had adhered to his customary method of setting one well on the *qui vive*, though, and given the management his accustomed thrill, by (apparently) not being well up with the work. One of the minor scenes, set only on the morning of production, was palpably wet,

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## The Bristol Stage

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being in fact finished the moment previous to Mr. Chute walking on the stage. The gov'nor eyed it critically, and then called to the paint room, "Is that horizon *straight*, Mark?" "It'll dry straight, sir," came the uncompromising answer from above—and so it did! There was a companion episode to this at the production of "Faithful Heart," and a real fright it gave me I well remember. The scene before the big railway set, with its distant view of the illuminated Suspension Bridge and Hotwells, was well on, and the Avon scene was still under his brush, and lying full stretch upon the stage. "You'll have a stage-wait," I said, in sorrow rather than in anger, for a few moments' wait at such a time is usually estimated by the audience as of ten or twelve minutes' duration. "The scene is just over, Mr. Barraud," cried the prompter, Charlie Adams. "Pull up," called the artist to the fly-men, and, in certainly not more than two minutes, Mr. Mark Barraud was bowing his acknowledgments of an enthusiastic "call," and with a sang-froid which suggested that the work had been complete a month before.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Frayne appeared in an American drama "Si Slocum." There was not much to attract in the work itself, but the Fraynes and their children did some remarkable work with the rifle, the climax being reached when Mr. Frayne with a backward shot over his left shoulder, smashed an apple placed upon the head of his blind-folded wife, her figure being reflected in a six-inch mirror before his eyes. Later in his English tour, owing to a stage-hand having carelessly set a wing of the scene, the actor, to his horror, saw his wife shot through the forehead fall dead upon the stage. The coroner's jury exonerated Mr. Frayne and accorded him their sympathy.

Mr. W. H. Pennington, the actor-hero, appeared in a Shakespearean round, and on the occasion of his benefit, wearing the uniform in which he had ridden on that historic occasion, recited Tennyson's "Charge of the Light Brigade," and thereby awaking the audience to much enthusiasm. The Vokes family, at Easter, and Miss Kate Santley, with "Princess Toto" and "Trial by Jury," preceded the benefit of Mr. G. M. Chute, who had now greatly relieved his parents of the cares of management, acting as treasurer in addition to putting in some stage work. He on this occasion appeared as Marmaduke Woodcock.

The Gilbertian successes, "Dan'l Druce" and "Sweethearts" were produced, Miss Florence Terry with Messrs. Arthur Wood, Henry Forrester, Charles Vandenhoff and David Fisher being of the company. Miss Jennie Lee was seen in her touching impersonation of "Jo" (Bleak House), after which, on the occasion of his benefit, Mr. G. R. Chapman let us hear "Cox and Box," Burnaud and Arthur Sullivan's musical farce on the well-known subject. Mr. John Rouse played Box, Mr. J. Shaw—from the Alhambra—Cox, and Mr. H. J. Dyer, the excellent baritone of the Bristol Histrionic Club, Bouncer.

The Gaiety Burlesque Company was here on July 2nd, the sisters



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## *The Bristol Stage*

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Jenny and Julia Beauclerc being supported by Misses Kate Vaughan and Marion Webb, together with Messrs. A. E. Bishop and E. W. Royce.

"Henry V," John Coleman's fine production, was a remarkable stage picture, and for a fortnight proved an attraction; *but* Mr. Coleman played the Warrior King, as also Ben Webster's part of Robert Landry in Watts Phillip's powerful drama the "Dead Heart," in which Mrs. Charles Calvert also appeared.

The Bristol Histrionic Club, in really excellent form at that time, played Tobin's capital comedy the "Honeymoon" and the farce "Chiselling" at a complimentary performance to Mr. Chute. The Club had been fortunate in enlisting the services of Miss Henrietta Hodson and Mrs. Arthur Wood (Miss E. Wiber). "Pom," a comic opera by Buccalossi, with Miss Pattie Laverne and Mr. Beverley, preceded a popular fortnight with Barry Sullivan. Barry was personally conducting the rehearsal of "Hamlet," whilst several of the employees in the property room, adjoining the stage, were conducting a raffle for a goose, the means employed being dice, thrown into an earthenware basin. Needless to say, there was "some rattle" going on. When Mr. Arnold, who was cast for the First Player, commenced his speech, a long one, the tragedian disappeared, and entering the property room, addressed the occupants in no gentle tones, as follows:—

"If down those craving gullets I were to thrust my sword instead of that infernal goose, you would make less confounded noise!" The irate tragedian was again on the stage in time to take his cue.

The "Plimsoll" play by Dion Boucicault and Charles Reade, "The Scuttled Ship," was effectively staged, Miss Louise Hibbert and Mr. J. H. Clynds being specially engaged for the leading characters.

At the "Old" Theatre Royal, Mr. W. H. Vernon gave a wonderfully artistic rendering in Grundy's play "Mammon," in which he had already scored a notable success at the Strand Theatre, and which under the title "A Bunch of Violets," Beerbohm Tree subsequently produced. Mr. Vernon was supported by Miss Swanborough.

Mr. John Clayton, with Miss Louise Moody, opened on November 19th with "All for Her," the play with which he had established so distinctive a mark at the Holborn Theatre. The two central figures, as in "The Only Way," were virtually Sidney Carton and Miss Manette, from the "Tale of Two Cities," and it would be difficult to surround these two characters with any setting that could rob them of their charm, and this Mr. Merivale certainly had not done. Mr. Clayton also played his original part Osip, in "The Danischefs"; an excellent Russian drama.

Mr. and Mrs. Kendal in a "Scrap of Paper," the "Queen's Shilling" and a revised version of "Black-Eyed Susan"—which however did not catch on—and three nights of Her Majesty's Theatre Italian Opera Company, including Mesdames Trebelli, Bettini, Marimon, Bauermeister

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## The Bristol Stage

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and Salla, Signori Runcio, Bettini, Celarda and Del Puente, with Li Calsi as conductor, brought the season to the Christmas pantomime, "Beauty and the Beast," written, as were the two previous annuals, by Mr. Wm. Muskerky. Miss Milly Cook was a fascinating Beauty and Mr. George Stretton exceedingly popular as the Beast; both Mr. John Rouse and Mr. Fosbrooke were in the cast and the great success, for it was exceptionally such, was the admirably staged snow ballet.

It was during the performance of "Uncle Tom" Mrs. Chute passed away, and upon the close of the death scene of Eva, Mr. Brandon Ellis—stage-manager—announced the sad intelligence. The performance was suspended and the audience quietly dispersed. Co-incident, the "Uncle Tom" production of A.D. 1853, occurred at the passing of Mrs. Chute's mother, Mrs. Macready.

MRS. CHUTE.—Born at Swansea, July 27th, 1824, Mazzerina Emily was the only daughter of Mr. William McCready and Sarah (Miss Desmond), the wife of his second marriage, the famous tragedian, William Charles Macready, being the son of his former wife.

Had the maternal purpose matured, Miss Macready would have been a musician rather than an actress, and quite early in her girlhood both the pianoforte and harp showed her to be a skilful performer, but "the call of the blood" claimed her to the footlights rather than to the music-stool.

Miss Macready was beyond dispute an actress of distinction, her repertoire, embracing characters in varied vein, being interpreted in such a manner as to merit high praise from connoisseurs, both behind and in front of the footlights. Especially was this the outcome of her appearance as Evadne, in Richard Lalor Shiel's play of that name, and also in Sophocles' famous work "Antigone," wherein she achieved a veritable triumph. Mr. Chute used to enjoy relating a reminiscence of the first night of this revival, when, as was then and still is customary upon the occasion of an unknown (!) play being produced, at the fall of the curtain there were loud calls for the author. Oblivious of, or ignoring the circumstance of his having ceased from earthly troubles some 500 years B.C., cries of "Sofocels!" "Sofocels!" resounded through the house, some explanation, inoffensive to the *amour propre* of the delighted audience, therefore became essential. "Ladies and Gentlemen," said the stage-manager, "we really have no knowledge of the author's presence in the theatre this evening. He has not been seen by the officials in front of the house and has failed to introduce himself to any one upon the stage, whilst inquiry at the stage-door gives assurance that he has not made himself known in that quarter. But whether present or not, I feel sure that when intelligence of this night's triumph greets his ears, he will be greatly gratified."

It was on October 28th, 1844, that Miss Macready, at the Church of St. Margaret, Westminster, was married to Mr. James Henry Chute,

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## The Bristol Stage

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a member of her mother's dramatic company. It was a "runaway match," her mother regarding her as too young (she had but just turned twenty) to embark on such a step. It was, however, entirely a love match, and Mrs. Macready speedily recognizing this, forgiveness which had been withheld at the outset, was not long delayed, and "Mrs. Mac" came to rely very materially upon her son-in-law in the management of the theatres. For several years, mother, daughter and son-in-law resided *en famille* and happily, in Bath.

Neither did Mrs. Chute, by any means, confine her energies in this direction, and when, as I have heard, she was remonstrated with for having rather too much work on hand, her reply frequently took the form of a favourite line, a quotation from "Uncle Tom's Cabin," "We do our own overseeing here, and things are looked to!"

On March 27th, 1878, and at the comparatively early age of fifty-four years, Mrs. Chute expired at 2, Park Row, Bristol.

Mr. George Macready, Mrs. Chute's only brother, was educated to become a surgeon, and was one of the first medical officers appointed to the s.s. *Great Western*, his efforts during a tempestuous home-voyage in 1839 being so marked as to result in the presentation of a massive gold snuff-box, on March 11th in that year, as a souvenir of the occasion, and in recognition by the passengers of his general kindness and attention.

Later, Mr. Macready quitted the sea and was appointed surgeon in the 31st Infantry Regiment, with which he served in the Sutlej campaign, dying from exposure and fatigue after the battle of Ferozeshah. A letter from the Adjutant-General to his mother accompanied the silver medal of the campaign, and informed Mrs. Macready that it was forwarded to her in recognition of her son's services and bravery.

Another distinguished member of her family is General Sir C. F. Nevil Macready, K.C.B., G.C.M.G., Legion of Honour—Commissioner of London police, he being a son of the famous actor, William Charles Macready, her half-brother.

The portrait to be seen in the corridors of the dress-circle was a presentation to Messrs. G. and J. M. Chute, subscribed to by every *employee* at the theatre.



## CHAPTER XIV

A.D. 1877

ON April 1st Mr. Charles Calvert brought from the Theatre Royal, Manchester, his splendid production of "Henry VIII," he (as at Manchester) representing the monarch, and Mrs. Charles Calvert, Queen Catharine. Miss Annie Poole was engaged for the part of Patience, and sang "Orpheus with his Lute."

Mr. Hollingshead's Gaiety Company, including Misses Eveleen Rayne and Connie Gilchrist, appeared in H. J. Byron's burlesque "Little Doctor Faust," and achieved a great success.

In June there was a Complimentary Benefit to Mr. Chute, which proved to be the last; Miss Bateman appearing as "Leah," Mr. Frank Lyars as Rudolph.

Notwithstanding the attraction offered in the bill of fare, upon Mr. Chute's appearance on the stage the entire audience cheered and applauded as it had never done before, and quite unmanned by his reception, and incapable of speech, Mr. Chute bowed, and turned towards the stage entrance. The audience understood, and renewed the applause which for the moment had quieted down, and amidst the most sympathetic cheers, Mr. George Chute, who had accompanied his father upon his entrance, led him away.

MR. JAMES HENRY CHUTE.—Born at Gosport, on July 4th, 1810, Mr. Chute very early in life adopted the stage for his profession, appearing almost at the outset of his career upon the Bristol boards under the *nom de théâtre* of "Mr. Chew," and subsequently, as Mr. Chute, acting in many of the chief dramatic centres of the United Kingdom. With Dublin audiences he was a great favourite, being a member of the theatre company there for several seasons, and wherever in connection with his profession he sojourned, he appears to have drawn around himself numerous friends. Indeed, so early as 1837, when engaged on the York and Lincoln circuits, under the management of Mr. Robertson, father of the famous author of "Caste," etc., and of "Madge" (Mrs. Kendal), Mr. Chute became the recipient of a handsome gold watch "in recognition of his dramatic talent and personal worth!"

In December, 1862, shortly after the burning of the Theatre Royal, Bath, he was presented by the citizens there with a service of plate "as a token of sympathy for his loss, and of their esteem for the manner in

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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which he had for so many years conducted the affairs of the theatre"; strong evidence that these characteristics were the genuine outcome of his nature, and no passing virtue.

That Mr. Chute was an excellent actor, there are, I trust, still many in our midst who, having had the opportunity of witnessing his efforts will most readily concede.

It was in 1843 that Mr. James Henry Chute joined Mrs. Macready's company at the Theatre Royal, appearing during September of that year, as Sir Patrick M'Guire, in a farce entitled the "Sleep Walker," a lease of the Assembly Rooms, Bath, being secured by him in 1848 and retained until September 29th, 1858, Mrs. Macready already being lessee of the Theatre Royal in that city.

On the look out for histrionic promise amongst the members of his resident company, night after night, and generally throughout the entire week, our manager was to be found occupying his familiar seat in the back row of the centre circle, and thoroughly intent upon that which was transpiring upon the stage. Wherever genius peeped, whether it proceeded from one of the principals or from a "general utility," Mr. Chute saw it, and the subsequent casting of coming plays, clearly conveyed to the company that it had not escaped his observation; but disappointment in a performer irritated him. On one occasion, visiting the King Street house for the first time that week, and on a Thursday (I was usually a Monday or Tuesday patron), Mr. Chute was promenading to and fro the ticket barrier and the entrance—outside it rained heavily. A "great American actress," was the announced attraction. "Have you seen Mrs. —?" I asked. "Once, Rennie, *once*!" and the reply spoke volumes.

Some difficulty being experienced in hitting upon a play for early production, I, at length, suggested "Formosa," then being successfully performed at Drury Lane. In recent times the work (which was by Dion Boucicault) would pass muster amongst the quite sedate productions of the time; it dealt, however, to some extent, with "fast life," and Mr. Chute aimed at keeping his theatre free from all reproach. "Formosa," he said, whilst mentally reviewing the subject, "No. No, there is some bread that is too dirty to eat."

Neither is the following anecdote lacking in significance. A local and narrow-minded magnate in an address to a certain community, whilst proudly proclaiming that he had never entered a theatre-door, indulged in some intolerant and highly offensive comments on the stage. I had prepared a letter, somewhat bitter in tone, I admit, but thoroughly justified by the fellow's gratuitous attack. On my submitting it to Mr. Chute, "No, no!" he observed, "honey is better than vinegar; it catches more flies!"

And with one other of such reminiscences of which I might, and that with ease, supply very many more, I trust that I have succeeded in

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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demonstrating the excellent directness, consideration and wit of Mr. Chute in such-like circumstances.

It occurred shortly after the incident last related, and the unusual spirit of the remark induced me to the belief that the unwarranted insult to his profession had affected him more than I had hitherto thought.

It was during another search for an attraction, an occupation rendered every day more difficult, London productions now being held by the producers, or otherwise acquired, for "sole provincial acting rights," and I suggested "could we do a week of Shakespeare, and I would secure a bespeak for one of the nights?" "Humph! William Shakespeare under the patronage of Mr. Super-phosphate of Guana! It *sounds* alluring!" I changed the subject, be very sure!

An excellent and energetic lessee—instance for the latter attribute the building of the theatre in Park Row—Mr. Chute was held in respect by his fellow managers and in affectionate remembrance by all who had been privileged to tread the boards under his management. Of this fact I have received both oral and written testimony.

Mr. William Rignold, an actor whose career in Bristol, and subsequently at the Olympic and Drury Lane, was one of continuous success, and whose reputation must still live active in the memory of many, expressed himself as follows:—

"BLEXLAND HOUSE,

"HORNSEY, N.

"October 16th, 1902.

"MY DEAR POWELL,—

"I thank you heartily for your manly and kindly letter—also your notes in Magpie. It is a great thing to be remembered, my dear old friend, and also to remember. My thoughts always go back with pleasure to Bristol and the old days. My old friend—Chute, worked for the elevation of the profession—and I believe this worked for his respect and won it. The last time I saw him he addressed me as his friend, and I was never prouder in my life, and that I retain the regard of his son is to me more than I can say. Your Dad was also my well-wisher, and it is most gratifying to find you also among my steadfast friends.

"I have taught myself to write in my long darkness (I have not seen God's sun for over five years), but I know it must be a horror to make out, so will say no more than this—remember me to any of the old 'crocks' who are still outside the crust—and may Bristol flourish—it seems to me the old-world place is making a new start—may it be so. I am very well, and if I can manage it I intend to write, so if I live I shall be a terror to a lot of people.

"With all kind regards to you and yours, from me and mine.

"Believe me,

"My old Friend and Brother,

"Faithfully yours,

"WILLIAM RIGNOLD."



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## The Bristol Stage

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"BLEXLAND HOUSE,

"HORNSEY, N.

"December 16th, 1902.

"MY DEAR PALGRAVE,—

"This is to thank you for your thought and support of me in the Ben. and my helplessness. I can't get the tone into this letter I wish—I am so upset about George Chapman. I can only say nature seems cruel. There is one thing, it serves us all alike. The Ben. was a great success and they tell me I spoke well, but I was obliged to hold myself with an iron hand in order not to give way. There is a full account in *Era* last Saturday—any of the Boys you happen to see thank them for me. You might write a few lines to the old crocks for me. The enclosed is an extract from a letter written to my Dad in the days that are gone never to return. The daughters have just hit upon it, and it brings the old time back. God bless you, old Boy.

### EXTRACT.

"You ask me how I like Bristol and the management. Well, I have not had time to look round yet. Bristol itself is a wondrous place. The sun comes down here in King Street, outside the theatre and shining—among the quaint old gables and everything is still and sleepy. The cocks and hens are basking in it, the smaller birds are revelling in it. The inhabitants are sitting on queer old steps in the shade. There are two old-fashioned Inns out of which might come Sir J. Falstaff at any moment, and yet within a minute you are on what is called the 'Welsh Back,' where all is bustle and work. In the square where I live there are some fine trees and the houses large but not picturesque as in the older streets and from my bedroom windows I can see the ship masts swaying to and fro—in short I cannot make the place out yet. But I know that it was here they built the *Great Briton*, the first screw which revolutionized the steam navigation of the world. How I don't know for there are no hammers to be heard, no dockyards to be seen, and no water to speak of.

"Our governor is a fine looking man, deep in the chest, broad in the shoulders—well set up, twinkling eyes—that can be severe—broad massive forehead and large moustache. His hands are Frenchy in their action, and he is never seen without a pair of gloves—which I am told by the old hands he has never been known to put on.

"But, Dad, if I know anything of human nature he is nothing if not a jokist. This is what he said last Saturday before dismissing us for Bath, 'Gentlemen who have done me the honour to join my company this season will make their bow this evening for the first time before a Bath audience. I hope—and I know you will deserve well at their hands. Bath is a beautiful city and possesses a magnificent theatre and the audience are the best out of London. Therefore be careful. Bath is famed for two things in particular. Its old beers, which are very beautiful; and its hot mineral waters, which I believe are very beneficial. I may here advise you never to take the beers before business, because they have a habit of flying to the head, and also at the same time council you never to take the mineral waters after performances, as they have a habit of flying in the opposite direction. This is a fact taught me by bitter personal

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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experience. Good morning, gentlemen; and with a twirl of the moustache he was gone. But, he is a strict disciplinarian for all that."

Not of Bristol only was the capability of its theatre management a legend, for throughout the ranks of both actors and actresses a stock company "Chute engagement" was regarded as a safe stepping-stone to that Mecca, "London, West," to which all actors aspired.

I last saw Mr. Chute on the 4th July preceding his death, that being our joint birthday anniversary, and for several years it had been our custom to then meet. Flags in plenty bedecked the harbour and at other points, and in our happiest vein we were disposed to attribute the display to other causes than that of the American Independence, in celebration of which they flew. And as we quaffed our draughts of Rhenish, we exchanged the customary good old English birthday greeting, "Many happy returns of the day!" Then followed a supplementary toast, invented by Mr. Chute, but which in subsequent years I never allowed to escape recognition, "The U.S. and US—our noble selves!"

But what to say on this occasion I did not know, for cruelly racked by both asthma and bronchitis, the companion of my birthday celebrations was sadly changed, and the familiar formula would, I felt, be strangely out of place. "I trust that you are easier, Mr. Chute?" I contrived to say at length, and, after a further distressing fit of coughing, Mr. Chute, quoting from "Bleak House," made answer, "The cart is shaken to pieces!"

Of an exceedingly genial temperament and at all times witty in conversation, Mr. Chute was welcomed in whatever society he elected to be met. Amongst the first to volunteer for national defence upon the threatened or anticipated invasion of the country, he joined the 1st Gloucestershire Rifle Corps in 1859, with the rank, as he humorously put it, of a "full private," and by the intervening steps mounting to that of colour-sergeant, and the regiment possessed no finer or more military figure. As a Freemason Mr. Chute was greatly esteemed by his brethren, and in 1866 was elected W.M. of the Jerusalem Lodge, No. 686.

Greatly proud of his numerous offspring, Mr. Chute was as their companion as well as father, and, affecting an inability to recollect in correct rotation the names of his ten children, Mr. Chute numbered them, and in the home circle always so addressed them. "Number five," he would say, "if you are going into the study, ask number seven to come to me," and the number indicated responded as readily as though addressed by name.

Leaving six sons and three daughters, one daughter (Maggie) having died during her educational course in Germany, Mr. Chute, at the age of sixty-six years, passed away at his residence, 2, Park Row, on July 23rd, 1878, practically three months subsequent to the death of his wife, their remains being associated in the family vault at Arno's Vale.

## CHAPTER XV

A.D. 1878

ENTER THE BROTHERS MACREADY CHUTE, exit the long-established and world-renowned "Bristol Stock Company," and with it much, if not all, the glamour of the provincial actor's life. Truth to tell, had Mr. J. H. Chute been moved by less of the family instinct of *esprit de corps*, consulted his own feelings of personal dignity and treated the affair purely as a commercial rather than artistic situation, some three or four seasons earlier must have found Bristol following in the wake of the more northern cities where commerce prevailed. Entire acting rights of new and successful productions had for some time been secured, and companies formed to tour the country. Provincial managements being compelled to take their programmes very much as the house-keeper acquires the family milk, *i.e.* when offering in the district.

With the joint theatre management appointed in the interest of the entire Chute family, the theatre-going public was very speedily in accord, for it was realized that from the public point of view no more welcome announcement of names could have been issued in connection with the reopening. Primarily there was that of George Macready Chute, presenting a powerful resemblance to his father when of similar years, filled with enthusiasm for the career of an actor, in which he had already given evidence of rapid and consistent progress—"Jimmie"—it is impossible to speak of "James" in this connection. I have known families possessed of a John or a James, I have known others whose asset has been a Jack or a Jimmie, maturity in the form of instances has appeared to be well accommodated with the names accorded them by custom, but whenever the more familiar mode of address has caught on during boyhood, nature and name would seem to have grown together, and the call of "Jimmie," "James," in later life would strike one as an anachronism. With George and Jimmie, therefore—or, to speak by the card, with George Macready Chute and James Macready Chute—as joint managers, the time-honoured vehicle once more starts upon its industrial and artistic journey, the first passengers on which were Mr. J. L. Toole & Co., those capital actors E. D. Ward, E. D. Beveridge, Jack Barnes, who brought with them "Diplomacy," and Carl Rosa's Combination, then consisting of Madame Vanzini and the Misses Georgina



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## *The Bristol Stage*

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Burns, Josephine Yorke, Ella Collins and Julia Gaylord, Messrs. Joseph Maas, Charles Lyall, L. Cadwalader and Fred C. Packard being the tenors, F. H. Celli, Snazelle, Leslie Crotty and Denbigh Newton, baritones, and Herbert Laurence, Muller and Henry Pope, bass. Mr. Carl Rosa was in the conductor's seat, Mr. John Pew, chorus master, and Mr. J. D. McLaren, acting manager, and presenting these works, "Maritana," "Il Trovatore," and "The Huguenots," were the Maas-Vanzini works, "Lily of Killarney," "Merry Wives of Windsor," and "Bohemian Girl."

Miss Bateman produced a Wilkie Collins drama, "The Dead Secret." Her company contained Mr. E. H. Brooke and Mr. Fosbrooke.

Messrs. Jarrett and Palmer staged their New York production of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," a version dealing mainly with the plantation episodes, which were enacted by legitimate "darkies." There was a capital caste though, William Calder being the Uncle Tom; Mark Kinghorne, Marks; Mrs. Charles Calvert, Cassy; and Miss Alfy Chippendale, Topsy. The piece ran three weeks.

**THE BALCONY ARRIVES.**—Mr. Charles Reade's company, with his dramatic version of Mrs. Burnett's novel, "That Lass o' Lowrie's," entitled "Joan," came next, Miss Rose Leclercq being in the title rôle; but the "hits" of the piece were to be found in Mr. William McIntyre and Miss Katie Maccabe. It was an entirely successful fortnight that the company filled, the second week, moreover, being marked by the institution, in October, 1878, of the circle-balcony seats, which ever since have proved such a popular portion of the auditorium.

On November 4th the first performance of Planquette's famous opera, "Les Cloches de Corneville" was given, and aroused the greatest enthusiasm. The exponents of the work were aptly chosen, being Misses Florence St. John and Kathleen Corri, Messrs. John Howson (Gaspard), Lithgow James, Mat Robson, F. Darrell, and as Gobo our whilom fellow-citizen, Mr. Allen Thomas. A local production of "Streets of Bristol" followed, the occasion being made memorable by the introduction of electric lighting (during the act intervals) in the auditorium. Mlle. Beatrice, accompanied by Misses Eliza Saville and Charlotte Saunders, in the "Women of the People," followed by Irving and the Lyceum company for six weeks, preceded the pantomime. Accompanying Mr. Irving was, amongst others, Mr. A. W. Pinero—the popular playwright, and of later years, Sir Arthur Pinero.

The first pantomime venture of the young managers was the "House that Jack Built," Mr. William Muskerry being again the author. The introductory plays were now abandoned, the performance commencing each evening at seven o'clock and there being five morning performances, that of Saturday, January 11th, being the last of these.

The company included Misses Eva Ross-Church, Katie Maccabe, Messrs. Julian Cross, Fosbrooke, J. L. Shine, with Messrs. Sydney and

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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Victor Stevens and Miss Emelie Stevens, the last three also providing the harlequinade. Mr. Mark Barraud had provided the scenery. It was during the run of this production that "pantomime excursion trains" were brought into vogue. A second edition of the work was presented on February 3rd, and on the 10th, by the introduction of the famous Majiltons, yet a third edition, the last appearance of "Jack's House" taking place on February 23rd, 1879. About this time comedians engaged in pantomime showed a disposition to be less respectful to the author's work than they would have been compelled to be to that of William Shakespeare, and it was, I believe, in one of the concluding weeks of this annual that the author, seated in the managerial box, towards the close of the evening, was invited to adjourn for the purpose of a little refreshment.

"Not just yet, dear boy," he said.

"What do you want to see? The show is nearly over."

"I don't want to *see* anything. I am waiting in the hope of hearing one of my lines!"

A complimentary benefit to Mr. Mark Barraud revealed an excellent performance of "Caste," mostly by amateur and personal friends of the scenic artist. Mr. George M. Chute was D'Alroy; Mr. David Bell, Hawtree; Mr. Honeyton, Eccles; Dr. Boys, Sam Gerridge; Mr. W. Irwin, Dixon; Polly Eccles was played by Mrs. Chapman (Miss Kate Mandlebert); Marquise by Miss Eleanor Aickin; Esther by Miss Amy Burnette.

For Easter there was a grand production of the T. P. Cooke prize drama, "True to the Core," from the pen of Mr. E. R. Slons, and a powerful company, amongst whom were Messrs. E. H. Brooke, J. D. Beveridge, A. T. Hilton, C. Arnold, E. B. Norman, E. H. Beresford and Fosbrooke had been specially engaged to enact it. "True to the Core" constituted the first important local production subsequent to the disbandment of the resident company. After a successful twelve nights the nautical play gave way to a military one, "The Relief of Lucknow" being staged with the same performers. With this excellent company around them, Messrs. Chute took their first joint benefit, producing Tom Taylor's "Twixt Axe and Crown," Miss Louise Moodie having been specially engaged for the part of the Lady Elizabeth. Miss Marriott's week brought us to Whitsuntide, when the "Shaughraun," with Mr. George Chute as Con and Mr. Fosbrooke as Harvey Duff, closed the spring dramatic season.

Mr. and Mrs. Billington opened the autumn season of '79 with some pretty little plays by Paul Meritt—"Rough and Ready," "Olive Branch," etc.—and Mr. J. H. Ryley's burlesque company followed with the same author's "Pickles." J. K. Emmett was followed by "A Cruise to China," and by Mr. and Mrs. George S. Knight in "Otto," in which, with great effect, Mr. Knight recited "The Water Mill," this performance leading

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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up to the production of "Proof," with Mr. Walter Speakman and Miss Emmeline Ormsby in the cast. An attractive programme in Broughton's "Ruth's Romance" and then Bronson Howard's "Truth" was presented by a company embracing Misses Rose Saker, Wentworth, Maria Daly and Letty Lind, with Messrs. J. G. Grahame, Walter Everard, etc., proved exceedingly to the public taste. Charles Reade's "Drink" played for twelve nights, Mr. Cyril Searle being Coupeau. Possessed of a certain morbid interest, the "Drink" correspondence, engineered in the local Press, secured for the play considerable patronage. *Verb sap.* Mr. Harry Jackson was manager to the company! "Sardanapalus" was finely produced, Miss Helen Cresswell, wife of Mr. Frank Kenyon, sometime lessee of the Theatre Royal, Bath, Miss Susan Rignold, Mr. Arthur Darley, and Mr. John S. Wood appearing in the most important parts. The Carl Rosa company, in addition to the whole of the artistes last mentioned as of that combination, now embraced Miss Giulia Warwick, Miss Clara Perry and Miss Amy Beresford, as also Messrs. Wilfred Esmond, Walter Bolton and T. Law. Guirand's opera "Piccolino" was produced.

The Majiltons, then all the rage, brought their farcical absurdity, "Round the Clock," and did excellent business.

That delightful soprano and actress, Miss Emily Soldene, accompanied by Signor Leli (José), followed in "Carmen" and "Madame Angot," whilst on her departure, playgoers got their first taste of Gilbert and Sullivan, Mr. D'Oyly Carte's company presenting "H.M.S. Pinafore."

"Sinbad the Sailor" may readily be accepted, as claimed, to be the initial pantomime production of the young managers, as the previous year's arrangements had been in hand at the time of Mr. Chute's death. The part of the King was in the hands of Mr. Charles Arnold, that of the shipowner in those of Mr. Fosbrooke, but beyond these, all prominent characters were represented by new-comers. There were :—

Miss Nellie Bouverie	as Sinbad the Sailor,
Mr. George Thorne	„ Tinbad the Tailor,
Mr. George (Jolly Little) Lewis	„ Dosy, the sleepy Cabin Boy,
Miss Julia Bullen (Mrs. George Lewis)	„ Zorilda,
Miss Grace Huntley,	„ Princess Pretty Pearl,
Miss Florence Harrington	„ Yazora,
Mr. Norton Locke-Norton	„ The Old Man of the Sea,
Miss Emily Vincent	„ The Fairy Enterprise.
Miss Alice Esden, Miss Alice Greenwood, and others.	

The "book" was a fine one, written by Mr. John McArdle, and proving a phenomenal success at Manchester the previous year, had been brought well up to date for Messrs. Chute. The splendid scenery was by Charles Smithers, Walter Hann and Mark Barraud, the costumes



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## The Bristol Stage

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being designed by Mr. Alfred Maltby of the Criterion Theatre. In the harlequinade the clown was impersonated by Jolly Little Lewis, other pantomimists being Miss Emmie Inman (afterwards Mrs. E. J. Lonnen), Miss Emily Darlow, Miss C. Anderson, with Mr. Will Langley as Harlequin and Robert Smith as Pantaloon, the stage management of the entire production-being in the hands of Mr. C. H. Stephenson.

Mr. Chapman was responsible for the music, the melodies selected proving very popular, although in this department there had very nearly been a fiasco. Mr. McArdle had established such a reputation for pantomime *libretti* that, in addition to the three principal (and rival) Manchester theatres, he had been commissioned for Bristol, Newcastle (and, I think, another important provincial) annuals, but either success, or dismay at the magnitude of the work before him, had induced a *dolce far niente* which, unfortunately, in its character did not incline towards the supply of lyrics. Day after day the arrival of these was expected but failed to mature. Pantomime songs in the days of "Sinbad" had reference to the situation, and upon this occasion had to be turned out in the manager's private office, and that during the last two or three rehearsals. Mr. George Chutè, who again had some little trouble with his ankle, flute in hand, hopped about like a canary in its cage, alternating a few bars of the melody for the benefit of the ditty authors, with a sluice of cold water from a bucket for the welfare of his ankle!

Mr. George Thorne, who sang one of his principal numbers in the car of a balloon, had, in consequence of success, to deliver innumerable verses therefrom, one which hit the public taste being—

"Two lovely black eyes!  
Oh! what a surprise!  
Only for wishing the missus was dumb,  
Two lovely black eyes!"

When Miss Nellie Bouverie (Mrs. Volt) and her husband were appearing in "The Girl who Didn't" at the Prince's in April, 1914, she recalled the whole of this episode, and for my benefit sang a verse of a popular "Sinbad" number in which she delighted:—

"O! lord, O dear! I did shiver and did shake,  
When the Old Man clasped my hand," etc.

During its sixty-two performances "Sinbad" had been witnessed by upwards of 110,000 patrons. Had there been any question that "Sinbad" was not run to its full course, was made evident on the last night of its performance, when the curtain obstinately refused to descend and block out the familiar scene. Eventually the act drop—at that time a separate cloth—was brought into requisition, and shut off at last the happy stage company from the highly diverted audience!

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## The Bristol Stage

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On March 1st Mr. Charles Wyndham appeared in Bronson Howard's Comedy "Brighton."

Miss Wallis produced, for the first time in the provinces, "Ninon," in which Mr. George M. Chute appeared as Marat, and subsequently, playing the same part, accompanied Miss Wallis on tour. Mr. Chatterton's company with "On the Jury" contained Mr. William McIntyre and Mr. Luigi Lablache, the season concluding with a twelve nights' engagement of the "Favart" Opera Company, which included Messrs. Walter Fisher, M. Dwyer, Lytton Grey and J. Neville, Misses Adelaide Newton, B. Harper, Rose Murray, etc.

The autumn season opened early, as on August 2nd, 1880, Mr. W. H. Vernon, Miss Ada Swanborough and Mr. Arthur Wood appeared in Grundy's comedy "Snowball," and for his benefit the first-named *artiste* selected the same author's masterpiece "Mammon," the part of Mr. Chinnery having already been performed by him on upwards of 400 occasions. Miss Alleyn, in whose company were Mr. R. L. Courtneidge and Mr. John Burton, was employed with the "Legitimate." The Carl Rosa Opera Company now embraced Misses Julia Gaylard, Clara Perry, Georgina Burns and Josephine Yorke as amongst the *prime donne*, and Messrs. Joseph Mass, Nordblom, J. W. Turner and Charles Lyall, those of the gentlemen, Ambrose Thomas's opera "Mignon" and "Zampa" being the novelties. William Calder brought a strong combination for "Rip Van Winkle," as did Mr. Wilson Barrett for a fortnight with "The Old Love and the New," and then for twelve nights the audiences revelled in Gilbert and Sullivan's "Pirates of Penzance." So far as my memory advises me, it was this engagement that was responsible for the venture in Bristol of the theatrical *matinee*, which has since become so highly popular with local playgoers.

Mr. Alfred Hemming and the Walton family, with George R. Sims' comedy "Crutch and Toothpick," were succeeded by Mr. Edward Terry, producing "Weak Women" and Byron's "Little Don Cæsar," Misses Julia Warden, Nellie Vane, Katie Ryan and Rosie St. George appearing with Messrs. Mark Kinghorne, E. W. Colman and others in support.

A *matinee* of D'Oyly Carte's children's "Pinafore" company was successful, and was followed by the Beatrice Company, now, alas! *minus* that delightful actress, and under the direction of Mr. Frank Harvey, "The Workman" and the "Woman of the People" being the plays produced.

Mr. Sims Reeves opened on December 13th with "Guy Mannering," and in order to introduce to the Bristol audience his son, Mr. Herbert Reeves, had secured for the Wednesday evening a strong concert party, consisting of Madame Alice Barth, Miss Lucy Franklin and Miss Villiers, Mr. George Fox and, of course, Mr. Herbert Reeves as vocalists, with Mr. H. Nicholson, the famous flautist, and Mr. J. L. Roedel at the piano.

There was a full band and chorus also, Mr. George R. Chapman con-

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## The Bristol Stage

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ducting, and having Mr. Thaddeus Wells as his leader. The theatre was then closed for rehearsals of the pantomime "Jack and the Beanstalk." Written by Mr. Frank W. Green, of Drury Lane pantomime renown, the production was a good one, Mr. Ed. S. Gofton being the producer. Mlle. Sidonie was responsible for the ballet, Mr. Will Simpson for the comic business, and the well-known departmental heads of the theatre for the remainder. Miss Nellie Bouverie was welcomed as Jack, and there was otherwise a fairly good cast. Until February 26th, 1881, it ran merrily each evening, there being also some eight or nine morning performances.

Mr. J. L. Toole's company, with the popular comedian *non est*, appeared in "Upper Crust," after which Miss Litton, supported by Miss Helen Cresswell and Messrs. Kyrle Bellow, Howe, Lionel Brough, Everill and others, appeared in old comedies. "Billie Taylor," a smart nautical comic opera by Edward Solomon, came next. "The Danites" preceded the reproduction of "Faithful Heart." I had a greatly improved cast on this occasion, Messrs. J. H. Clynes, Walter H. Fisher, George Stretton and J. G. Taylor being specially engaged.\*

"New Babylon" followed, and at Easter the "Shaughran" was revived. On April 21st Mr. George Chute took his benefit, and appeared as Digby Grant in the "Two Roses," whilst Mr. Walter H. Fisher, the original provincial Jack Wyatt, again filled that part.

Carl Rosa's company, introducing Mr. Barton M'Guckin, produced "Promessi Sposi" for the first time in Bristol.

The Bristol Histrionic Club gave a performance for the memorial fund to Mr. John A. Ottey, a popular citizen and member of the club. Messrs. C. Bernard, H. G. Davis and Tom Brown appearing with Misses A. H. Irwin and Marion Hill in "Turn Him Out," Mr. Rennie Palgrave reciting "The Little Hero," and, as a humorous foil to that pathetic story, "Bill Gibbon's Deliverance" (both stories being by Arthur Mathison) was given by Mr. George Chute. "New Men and Old Acres" concluded the performance, Messrs. H. C. Dyer, J. Warley, Walter Kidner, R. A. Dodds, G. F. Wightman and other gentlemen playing up well to the professional ladies who gave their services.

"Betsy," with an excellent cast, preceded D'Oyly Carte's Company, including Messrs. Fred Billington, Cadwaladr and Arthur Rousbey, and introducing for the first time to Bristol the "Sorcerer."

For Whitsuntide that screamingly funny absurdity, "*Voyage en Suisse*," was performed by the Hanlon Lees and company, and drew splendid houses for twelve nights, as did "The Guv'nor" during the following week, with the following exceptional cast:—

Butterscotch . . . . .	Mr. Richard Dalton.
Freddy . . . . .	Mr. George Alexander.
Macclesfieldy . . . . .	Mr. J. F. Young.



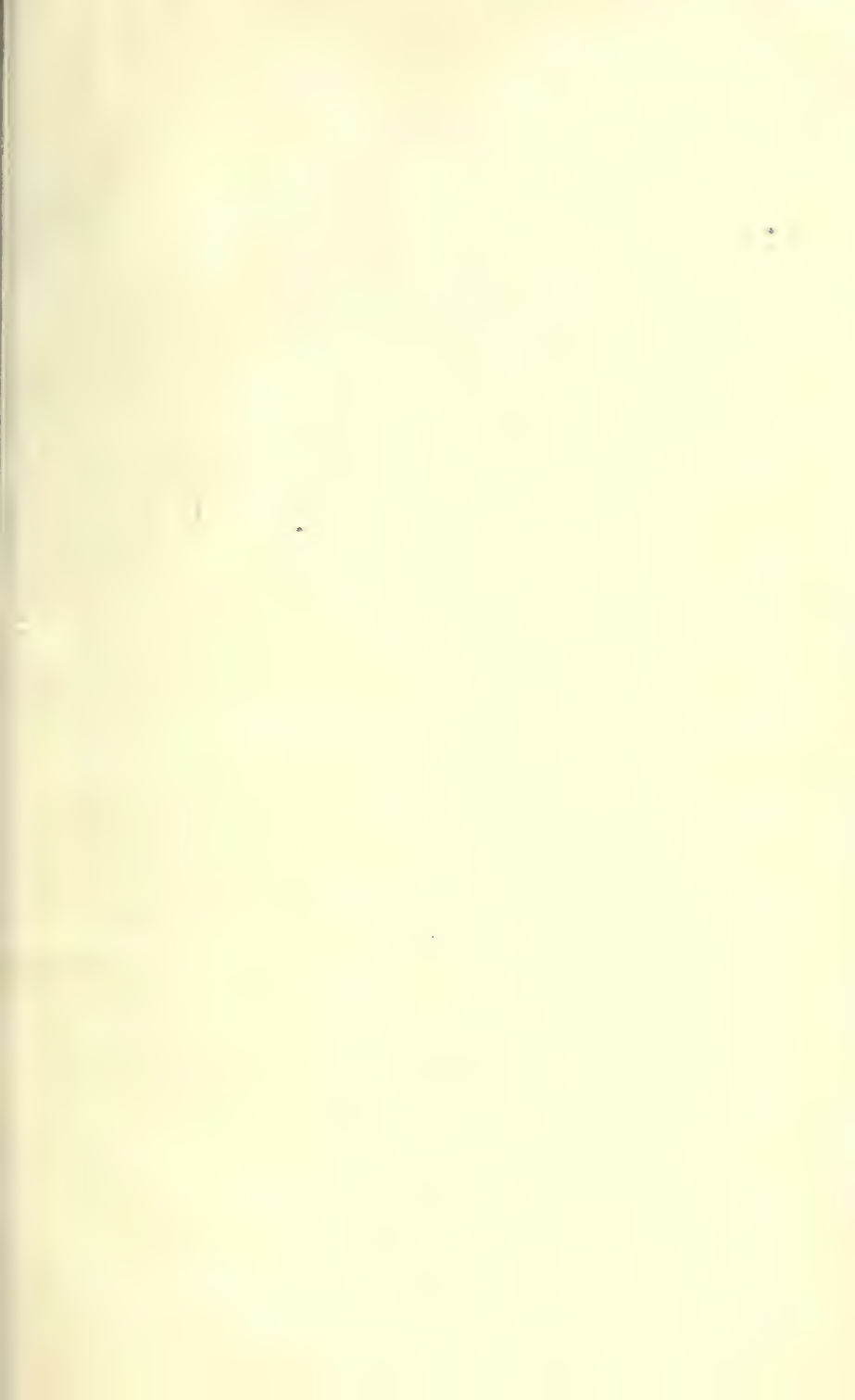
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## *The Bristol Stage*

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Theodore . . . . .	Mr. Herbert Waring.
Jellicoe . . . . .	Mr. Stephen Caffrey.
Gregory . . . . .	Mr. T. W. Robertson.
Aurelia . . . . .	Miss E. Brunton.
Kate . . . . .	Miss Emily Darncombe.
Polly . . . . .	Miss Florence Rayburn.
Mrs. Macclesfield . . . . .	Miss Fanny Robertson.
Carrie . . . . .	Miss Maud Robertson.
Barbara . . . . .	Miss Ada Glynne.

During the ensuing week the same company, which it will be noted consisted very considerably of the talented Robertson family, gave a series of "farewell" representations of the Robertson comedies "Caste," "School," "Ours," and "Home," and on July 9th the season came to an end.



~~Wm. J. Byron~~  
Madge Heeddal

Charles Arnold

Luigi Abblachi <sup>Adas Gas</sup> ~~Edson~~

George Russell Chapman Beatrix

Miss Reeves

Nelly <sup>Tring</sup> 1863 - Vernon Carl Rosa

Ellen Terry 1891 - Matthews

John Billington <sup>Mark 144</sup> Baird -

Ronald Byrne <sup>Lev T. G. Reed</sup>



## CHAPTER XVI

A.D. 1881

**T**HE REFRESHMENT ROOMS.—When on Bank Holiday, August 1st, 1881, the theatre was reopened, great improvements had been effected in the commissariat department, inviting refreshment rooms having been constructed both at the upper boxes and pit levels, the management of this department being now vested in the lessees, which had not previously been the custom.

"Olivette," with Miss Esme Lee and Messrs. Phil Day and E. S. Gofton, played the first engagement. Mr. Edward Compton, accompanied by Miss Sylvia Hodson, appeared in a round of old-time plays, and was succeeded by Messrs. Fred Gould and Robert Nelson in the "Black Flag."

Miss Kate Lawler introduced G. R. Sims' "Member for Slocum" and the "Don Juan Junior" burlesque, Mr. J. L. Shine being in the company.

A really fine production of Henry J. Byron's English dramatisation of "Michael Strogoff" was next on the boards, after which came the Carl Rosa Company, introducing for the first time on the lyric *stage* Mr. Ben Davies, who played Thaddeus in the "Bohemian Girl," and also Miss Julia Gaylord and Fred C. Packard, a delightful combination, in "Lohengrin," heard for the first time here. Miss Litton followed with Irving's Lyceum production of the "Corsican Brothers," Mr. Kyrle Bellew during the first week, and Mr. Herman Vezin throughout the second, appearing as the *dei Franchi frere*. "Patience" came next. It is a fact that the libretto of this delightful work of Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan had been completed during the previous month, and seldom was it better produced or cast, and never more entrancingly rendered than on this December 5th, 1881. We saw Mr. George Thorne as Bunthorne; Mr. Arthur Rousbey, Grosvenor; Mr. James Sidney, the Duke; Miss Fanny Edwards, Lady Jane; Miss Elsie Cameron, Lady Angela; and Miss Ethel M'Alpiné, Patience.

December 12th was even more noteworthy, being the first occasion of Mr. Henry Irving and Miss Ellen Terry being supported here by the entire Lyceum company. "Merchant of Venice," "Charles I," and Tennyson's "The Cup" were the chief attractions. Then followed "Aladdin," the Christmas fare of 1881-2. Of the principal members of

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## The Bristol Stage

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the company were Misses Sara Beryl, Katie Ryan, Baby English and Julia Bullen, Messrs. George Lewis, James English, Fosbrooke and Mark Kinghorne. Mr. William Younge was the author, Mr. John Doyne the producer, and Mr. Mark Barraud, with his assistants, was responsible for the whole of the scenery. The pantomime, during the last week of which Miss Nellie Bouverie appeared as Prince Pekoe (previously in the hands of Mr. Fosbrooke), was performed on sixty-four occasions and visited by upwards of 90,000 patrons.

"Cast Adrift," the nautical drama written by my brother and myself (with our noms-de-plume thus—Rennie Palgrave and Fred Gover), was the following attraction. It was a magnificent production by the brothers Chute, and was taken in its entirety to Sadlers Wells, the Olympic, and other London theatres; Mr. William McIntyre, as Tom Croft, achieved a lasting triumph. Speaking of its production in Glasgow, the *Glasgow News* said: "A play that combines both literary and spectacular attractions rises out of the Drury Lane rut, and 'Cast Adrift' ought to draw superior houses to either 'The World,' 'Pluck,' or even 'Youth.'"

EARLY DOORS.—"Early Doors" were now instituted, and on wet nights especially there was a gratifying appreciation of the arrangement.

After a fortnight with "Cast Adrift," the receipts of March 10th being devoted to a fund raised for the survivors of the *Bath City*, a Bristol liner which had foundered in the Atlantic, "Queen's Evidence" preceded the Easter production by Holt and Wilmots of the first of those Drury Lane huge dramatic productions, the "World." In the company were Messrs. John Vollaire, George Warde, Austin Melford, etc., and the drama had nineteen representations. "Youth," Drury Lane's second of the big "shows," the drama seeing the Whitsun holidays through. "Retiring," a comedy presented by the old "Caste" company for a week, "Imprudence," enacted by Mr. Carton's company for another, and then the opera of "Billee Taylor," with Mr. John Rouse as Ben Barnacle, brought the spring season to a close.

On Bank Holiday (August 7th, 1882) the season being inaugurated by Miss Emily Soldene, introduced to Bristol Von Suppé's opera "Boc-caccio."

"Cloches de Corneville," with Shiel Barry as Gaspard, the part of his creation, was followed by Miss Marie de Grey, Mr. Dion Boucicault *père* coming for Miss de Grey's benefit performance, and being seen as Kerry, his original character in his own delightful play of that name.

"Moths" was performed by Miss Litton and the Olympic company, an excellent one, and which included Misses Louise Willes, Carlotta Addison and Maud Brennan, and Messrs. Kyrle Bellew, C. Cartwright and W. H. Denny.

"Manteaux Noirs" (the Black Cloaks) followed. When Mr. George Chute was chatting with a newspaper critic in Glasgow a little earlier,

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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the latter told our joint-manager how he had been charmed with a new opera, describing it as follows : It was called the "Mantuo nores," ye ken, or the "Black Clocks !" At the time the speech conveyed nothing to Mr. Chute's mind, and he determined to look out for the "Black Clocks."

The Carl Rosa Company now included Mlle. Marie Roze and Mlle. Valleria, and produced "Fidelio," "The Flying Dutchman," and "Dame Blanche."

A.D. 1882

Miss Rose Leclercq as Kate Verity, the character which Mrs. Kendal had made so delightful in Pinero's comedy, "The Squire," was supported by Messrs. G. B. Phillips, Charles Cooper, A. Elwood, B. Bucalossi and Albert Chevalier, the "Squire" tour being directed by Mr. J. Ellis Miller, who now paid his first visit to the Park Row Theatre, returning, however, upon the death of Mr. James Macready Chute in order to take up his present position of resident manager and treasurer. But Mr. Miller's family have had Bristol associations of residence during their last three or more generations. Born in Redcliff parish, his grandfather, whilst still in his teens, went to London, where at both the English Opera House and Drury Lane Theatre he was constantly in the cast with such world-famous *artistes* as Balfe, John Templeton, Miss Romer, Miss Poole, Mons. and Madame LeClercq, Grimaldi, and Braham.

MISS GENEVIEVE WARD.—The next engagement was that of Miss Genevieve Ward as "Forget-me-not." Bristolians, perhaps, hardly realize the extent to which this remarkable personality was associated with their city, for, although her birth occurred in New York, March 27th, 1838, her father, Col. Sam Ward, was American Consul here in 1858 and for some years following, residing next Victoria Rooms, Clifton, where now stands the Colonial Institute, and here his gifted daughter was a pretty frequent visitor. As Madame Guerrabella (she was indeed the Countess de Guerabel, having married the Count in Warsaw in 1853), she made her first operatic appearance at La Scala, Milan, in 1856, and in this country in 1858, at Covent Garden, in English opera with the Pyne and Harrison company. In 1860 Madame Guerrabella was singing in Italian opera at Her Majesty's Theatre, notably in "Roberto il Diavolo" and "I Puritani," in which latter work I then first had the pleasure of seeing and hearing her upon the lyric stage. In 1860, when visiting her father, she gave her services for a concert in aid of the Garibaldi fund at the Victoria Rooms, and was not again seen as an *artiste* here until the occasion which has introduced this little biography. Having strained her voice by too strenuous work, the lyric stage was abandoned, and, under her maiden name, "Genevieve Ward," the Countess, having spent years in study, made a venture at the Theatre Royal, Manchester, as Lady



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## The Bristol Stage

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Macbeth, her instant success leading to the production of Andrew Merivale's "Forget-me-Not" at the Lyceum, London. But it is probably in this later stage that this great *artist's* career is the more remarkable, for after appearing in that character on upwards of 2,000 occasions, and in every quarter of the English-speaking world, Miss Genevieve Ward appeared with Sir Henry Irving in "Richard III," "King Arthur," and "Becket," and in 1894 was again seen at the Prince's Theatre. Yet again, we find Miss Genevieve Ward's name "starred" at the St. James's Theatre in "The Aristocrat" right into June, 1917, at which time she had more than completed her eightieth year, and repeating that marvellous performance at the Prince's during the following October.

If all this be considered a digression, "*Mea culpa!*" but the story of this full life, so packed with romance and interest, as well as associated with our city and with the Bristol stage, appeals strongly to my pen. Miss Genevieve Ward was supported by Mr. W. H. Vernon as Sir Horace Welby, as had been the case throughout her world-wide tours.

Mr. Wilson Barrett's company followed for a fortnight in "The Lights of London," Mr. Leonard Boyne, who about this time must have found difficulty in assuming his customary headgear, playing Harold Armytage, with Miss Cissy Grahame as Bess. At the rehearsal, in an effort to impress upon the company the relative value of the respective characters, Mr. Boyne remarked, "You, ladies and gentlemen are, let us say, the coat, Miss Grahame and myself being the spangles!" Mrs. R. Power—an actress of great experience and ability—easily recognizing her opportunities as Mrs. Jarvis, the showman's wife, was content to observe *sotto voce*, "And I think he will find that Jarvis (Mr. H. C. Arnold) and I are pretty big spangles also!" Others of the company were Miss Kissie Wood (Mrs. H. C. Arnold) and Messrs. R. S. Boleyn, J. S. Haydon and Henry Lee.

The 1882-3 pantomime was "Whittington and his Cat," the former finding an excellent exponent in Miss Julia Warden and the latter in Master Cummins. As Alice Fitzwarren Miss Amy Grundy was delightful; as Idle Jack Mr. George Thorne was, as at all times, "top hole," and Mr. E. M. Robson made a capital "old woman." There were several important features of the work, which was written and produced by Mr. C. H. Stephenson. Amongst these was a violin solo by Mlle. Rita Presano, a double panorama of the Thames (Mr. Arthur Henderson), and the "Turn again Whittington" sounded by an octave of magnificent bells, manufactured for the Messrs. Chute at a cost of £450. A further welcome item was the inclusion in the cast of Messrs. Henderson and Stanley, the "living marionettes." Mr. Harry Paulo was the clown. The attendance surpassed even that of "Sinbad," and attracted until its seventy-fourth representation.

John F. Sheridan in "Fun on the Bristol," and then Mr. F. Neebe brought his pantomime (a successful one) "Robinson Crusoe," from the

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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Theatre Royal, Bath, the great feature of the production being the splendid performance of Friday by Mr. E. J. Lonnen, shortly to be the great hit at the Gaiety, London, in "Here Comes the Bogie Man," "Killalvo," etc., and who married Miss Emmie Inman, a late and delightful columbine of ours. Twelve nights with "The Silver King," in which Mr. E. H. Brooke gave a remarkably fine interpretation of the part of Wilfred Denver. All round it was an excellent performance of Henry A. Jones' initial effort, Miss Cissy Grahame playing Nellie Denver; Mr. Edward J. George, Jakes; Mr. Charles K. Chute, Geoffrey Ware; Mr. A. G. Leigh, Baxter; and Mr. R. S. Boleyn, the Spider. Afterwards came Miss Bateman with my drama, "Shadow and Sunshine," produced at the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh, and of which the Scottish Press had proved unusually appreciative.

Unfortunately a recent illness in the Bateman family had claimed the attention of the famous actress, and the formation of her company had been entrusted to other hands, who apportioned two of the leading parts, one to his wife and the other to himself. As I did not approve the selection and gathered that the engagement had (modestly) been made for three years, supported by the opinion of both Messrs. George and James Macready Chute, who were also friends of the famous actress, I withdrew my play from performance by the then existing company.

Planquette's opera "Rip" succeeded; "Pluck," from Drury Lane, following, Messrs. James Elmore, A. C. Lilly and Edmund Lyons being amongst the interpreters. Mr. Kyrle Bellew brought the Lyceum production of "Romeo and Juliet," and was associated with Miss Fanny Reid as Juliet, Mr. Courtenay Thorpe as Mercutio, and Messrs. John Voltaire and Henry Rowe Guy, of Bristol, in the by-gones. "Iolanthe" filled the house for six nights and a matinee.

Six nights of the Rentz-Santley American novelty company for Bank Holiday, and the following week brought the "Ruling Passion," in which Miss Amy Steinberg appeared. Then came "Our Boys," with Mr. David James in his original part of Perkyn Middlewick, Miss Minnie Palmer next introducing to Bristol her speciality "My Sweetheart," Mr. Charles Arnold, the American Tony, supporting. Excellent business resulted.

Miss Marie de Grey in Robert Buchanan's "Lady Clare," was followed by Miss Kate Vaughan in the "Country Girl" and "Cinderella," she being succeeded by the Carl Rosa Company, producing "Esmeralda," with Miss Georgina Burns in the name part.

Alfred Hemming was here with "Mother-in-Law," etc., after which Mr. J. H. Clynds appeared as William Hope in the Adelphi drama "Love and Money," and Miss Ada Cavendish as Marian Heatherly in A. C. Calmour's "Broken Bonds."

The following week, during which Miss Florence St. John appeared in "Madame Favart," and a new comic opera by Offenbach, "Lurette,"

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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which had been translated into English by Mr. Frank Deprez, a local author, was a highly popular one at the Park Row house, Miss St. John being accompanied by Mons. Marius, Mr. H. Bracy, Mr. David Fisher, jun., and others.

Mr. Barry Sullivan was the next attraction, and on December 17th the Bristol Histrionic Club gave a performance of "Blow for Blow," A. J. Byron's capital drama, for the benefit of the funds of the Bristol A.O.F.

"Cinderella," written by J. Wilton Jones, was the subject of the pantomime 1883-4, scenery being provided by Messrs. J. K. Lennan, Mark Barraud and E. Stock. The special features of this production, and which proved immensely popular, were the diminutive cream-coloured ponies drawing the "Fairy Victoria," and the Snow Ballet, arranged by Miss Kate Kelly. The sisters Cuthbert, Miss Kate Lovell and Miss Mary Ellen White were the principal ladies engaged, Messrs. Henry C. Arnold, E. W. Colman and Harry Crellin being amongst the gentlemen. Messrs. Rezenc and Robini, afterwards clown and pantaloone, were also in the cast. At its last representation it had been witnessed by close upon 100,000 patrons. This final performance was again under the customary patronage and presence of the Right Worshipful the Mayor and the Mayoress (Mr. J. D. and Mrs. Stevens), but the patronage and presence of this occasion had an especial significance. The determination of the management to maintain order in every part of the auditorium had led to one of the attendants appointed for that purpose forcibly ejecting a man, who subsequently took action at the Assizes, and was awarded the sum of £30. The mistake of the attendant lay not in the ejection, but in his not calling upon the police officer to perform the act. What the citizens thought of this matter and of the general character of the management was pretty clearly defined on April 27th following, when a number of gentlemen assembled in the crush-room of the New Theatre Royal in order to present the Brothers Chute with a testimonial having immediate reference to the event. This presentation took the form of £100 in cash, accompanied by a volume containing the names of nearly 200 subscribers to the funds, amongst which was that of the Rt. Worshipful the Mayor. The first page of the volume bore the following inscription:—

### "CHUTE INDEMNITY FUND.

"Names of the subscribers to the fund raised by private subscription in appreciation of the efforts of Messrs. G. M. and J. M. Chute to enforce order in the New Theatre Royal. Sam Lang, treasurer, April 27th, 1883."

"Shadow and Sunshine" was now in the hands of Miss Florence Wade, of the Haymarket Theatre, and her capable company comprised Miss Dolores Drummond, Miss Mary Ellen White, Miss Kathleen O'Conner



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## The Bristol Stage

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and Miss C. Cameron, with Messrs. Vincent Sternroyd, A. G. Stewart, Lawrence Grey, Creston Clarke, Walter G. Buist, etc. When this company was in Ireland the *Belfast News* said: "'Shadow and Sunshine' is beyond doubt a cleverly conceived piece. The panoramic and mechanical effects are minimised and common sense is never outraged for the sake of producing what is known as a strong situation. The plot is worked out with directness and with a vivid effect that leaves little to be desired." Miss Florence Wade, a truly delightful actress, fell a victim to the then terrible scourge of poisoned native oysters. I had lunched with her at her flat and discussed details of the new tour with "Shadow and Sunshine." She was, however, engaged to dine elsewhere that night, and on my return to her flat the following mid-day I was met with the terrible information that she was dead.

A fine production of Boucicault's "Flying Scud," with Mr. George Thorne as Nat Gosling and Mr. George M. Chute as Tom Meredith, preceded Mr. Joseph Derrick's eccentric comedy "Confusion."

There was a complimentary benefit to Mr. F. W. Irwin—father of Mr. William and Miss Haviland—by the local amateur clubs. Mr. Sims Reeves was here for two nights, appearing in "Guy Mannering" on the first, and in the last act of "Lucia" on the second, being supported by Miss Rose Hersee, soprano, and Mr. George Fox, the eminent basso.

The production here of "Fedora," a conspicuous success at the Hay-market, was an item appealing exceptionally to the *haut-ton*, and on the Friday of the week, amongst an exceedingly fashionable assembly, were Their Graces the Duke and Duchess of Beaufort, whose projected patronage had already been announced. Miss Laura Villiers appeared as Fedora, and otherwise the cast included Mr. Arthur Dacre as the Count Ipanoff, Mr. W. H. Day as Gretch, and Mr. Francis as Desire. A novelty was that of the following week's attraction, an "Adamless Eden," the whole of the performers, including a full orchestra, being of the sex of Eve!

In the comic opera "Estelle" we heard Miss Dora Willy in the name part, and our whilom fellow-citizen, Mr. George Temple, as Count Composito, he being also entrusted with stage management, whilst Mr. Luscombe Searle, the composer, himself occupied the conductor's chair. Offenbach's "La Vie" was the next item of the season, Miss Maud Branscombe being supported by a good company, amongst whom we recognized Mr. E. J. Lonnen and Miss Emmie Inman (now Mrs. Lonnen).

The D'Oyly Carte Company introduced "Princess Ida," whilst "Haunted Lives" and George Walton & Co. in "Three Hats" brought the season to a close.

There was, however, an "Extra Night" of unaccustomed interest in the complimentary benefit given to Mr. George R. Chapman, in order to celebrate his twenty years' service as Musical Conductor under the Chute management. The dramatic share of the programme, consisting

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## The Bristol Stage

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of "Rob Roy" and "Box and Cox," fairly bristled with the names of local popular *artistes* and pantomime favourites of recent years, amongst those in the Scottish operatic drama being Miss E. Rudd (as Helen MacGregor), Miss Maud Avery and Miss Harwell, Messrs. Montague Worlock (Francis Osbaldistone), Mr. H. J. Dyer (Major Galbraith), Mr. George Macready Chute (Rob Roy), Mr. Fosbrooke (Dougal), Mr. A. J. Levy, Messrs. Harry Crellin, Lampard, Lethbridge Beck, Mr. Henry Fenwicke, and as Rashleigh Osbaldistone, Mr. Edward Fletcher (lessee of the Theatre Royal, Cardiff), and Mr. Richard Edgar, who played the Bailie. The well-known and popular farce was performed by Mr. George Thorne, Box; Mr. Henry C. Arnold, Cox; and Mr. E. M. Robson, Mrs. Bouncer.

THE PRINCE'S.—The reopening on Bank Holiday, August 4th, 1884, was as the "Prince's Theatre," the old title having on several occasions proved confusing to visitors. Mr. Calder with his "White Slave" company had the honour of "kicking off," Mr. Harry Jackson's Opera Company in Planquette's "Nell Gwynne" following. "Claudian" was finely placed upon the stage, and the company embraced Miss Laura Linden (Almida), Miss Cissy Burton, Miss Claire Devigne and other ladies, Mr. Leonard Boyne, J. Dewhurst, Chas. K. Chute, George Sennett, Arthur Yates and Wm. McIntyre—quite a strong array of dramatic talent, the result being a fortnight of crowded houses. Miss Kate Vaughan, with whom came Miss Nellie Bouverie and Messrs. John Bannister, Allen Thomas and Charles Cooper, gave, during her six nights' engagement, "The Country Girl," Byron's burlesque, "Little Fra Diavolo," and her latest London success, "The Little Viscount."

Miss Bella Pateman received a cordial welcome as Miami in the time-honoured drama "Green Bushes," the Buckstone drama, well-worn as it had been in the old days, coming up as fresh as paint. Mrs. Royce Carleton and Mr. Louis Calvert and Mr. Robert Pateman afforded chief support. A Carl Rosa week introducing Boito's "Mephistelê," with Mlle. Marie Roze and Mr. Barton McGucken as Marguerite and Faust, and Mr. Ludwig as Mefistole, Ludwig being famed for an ultra-bass voice—and huge feet. The operas were followed by the Leopolds in "Frivolyty," and by "Woman and the Law," Miss Fanny Brough (Mrs. R. S. Boleyn), Miss Cavalier, with Messrs. R. S. Boleyn, J. G. Grahame, G. Canninge and J. S. Blythe being in Mr. Wilson Barrett's company representing it.

HUGH CONWAY AND THE ARTS CLUB.—"Called Back," the dramatic version of our fellow-citizen "Hugh Conway's"—or, to give him his birth name, Frederick John Fargus's—famous story, tested the capacity of the Prince's as it had never previously been, for, apart from the astonishing popularity of his Christmas story, the author had been a well-known and approved citizen before attaining his great literary reputation. During the week that "Called Back" occupied the stage,

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## The Bristol Stage

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therefore, Mr. Hugh Conway and his dramatic *collaborateur*, Mr. Comyns Carr, were the recipients of quite a number of complimentary invitations at the hands of the citizens. Amongst those they found the opportunity of accepting was that of Mr. D. T. Taylor, joint proprietor of the *Bristol Times and Mirror*, and an old friend of Mr. Hugh Conway, who assembled some thirty-five fellow admirers at a dinner at the Royal Hotel. The Arts Club also provided an elaborate supper in honour of the authors, and, throwing my memory back, I must, I think, award this night the palm of the several Arts Club's famous occasions of festivity.

Anent this popular retreat into the realms of Bohemia, some few details may be read with interest, and amongst the "old boys" will, I think, be looked for. The Arts Club was constituted on the initiative of the following seventeen gentlemen, who, as the "Governing Body," ruled both its customs and its destiny.

These were—Messrs. Henry C. Arnold, Mark Barraud, David Bell, W. R. Chandler, G. Russell Chapman, George Macready Chute, James Macready Chute, Stephen M. Chute, A. Morris Edwards, J. G. Heyman, Eustace A. S. Hounsell, Walter E. Lloyd, E. G. Osborn, Fredk. Gover Powell, Geo. Rennie Powell, F. W. Tonkin and Montague Worlock. The list of the 250 and upwards of subscribing members to the Club contained the names of F. Goodenough Taylor, Walter Hawkins, Harold Lewis, Thos. Carrington, Andrew Waite, F. R. Leibick, J. H. Clifton and others of our resident arts world, whilst of those migratory stars of the dramatic or operatic cult who came our way, and few indeed it was who passed by on the other side, one finds the names of J. L. Toole, Meyer Lutz, George Barrett, Seymour Hicks, Charles Arnold (of New York), Arthur Roberts, W. H. Vernon, Edward Terry, William Rignold, George Conquest, Louis Calvert, Tom Paulton, F. C. Packard, Leslie Crotty, Basil Chatterton, Col. J. H. Mapleson, Willie Edouin, F. J. Lonnen, E. Grossens, Fred Leslie, J. G. Grahame, Fred Terry, Fred Vokes, T. W. Robertson, John Rouse, Alfred Maltby, Arthur Elmore, Ainsley Cook, Mat Robson, D. J. Canary, Albert Hengler, A. D'Esterre Guinness, Charles Collette, John Billington, Barton McGucken, G. F. Marler, Louis Calvert, *et hoc genus omne*, for the reputation of "the club where the members helped themselves to refreshment, and, without the employment of steward or other club servant, were relied upon to place the cash equivalent in the till, and where there were such wonderful nights of artistic entertainment," had permeated the ranks of theatredom from John O'Groats to Lands End; that is, it *would* have touched those remote districts had there been theatrical ventures thereat to hear the legend.

The club-room, with its four handsome stained windows, illustrative of the famous heads of the various art branches, Shakespeare, Byron, Mozart, etc., above the wainscoting was decorated with delightful glimpses of historic scenes, the work of Mr. Mark Barraud, scenic artist of the Prince's Theatre, and a member of the Club's Governing Body.



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## *The Bristol Stage*

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One panel, that adjoining the doorway, remained in distemper only, and his fellow governors failed to gather from the artist the why or wherefore of their decorations remaining incomplete. The solution came upon the occasion of the Hugh Conway visit, when both members and guests found themselves confronted by an admirably conceived and entirely *apropos* cartoon, executed in crayon. It represented, as seen from the back of the stage, the joint authors before the footlights, bowing their acknowledgments of the audience's approval—Mr. Comyns Carr's unmistakably podgy figure, with ridiculously short dress-coat tails, besides the æsthetic and faultlessly garbed form of our fellow-citizen; whilst above the figures appeared the explanatory legend :—

Authors

CALLED                      (and beneath)

BACK  
View.

When in the morning sunshine the two guests left the club, for, be it remembered, such functions there were necessarily postponed until the final fall of the curtain at the Prince's, the urgent summons of a number of the members brought them back again, only to find the company engaged in desultory and impersonal conversation. "Well, what is it?" inquired Hugh Conway. "Oh, we only wanted you to realize that you were '*called back*,'" replied Mr. George Macready Chute. After a hearty laugh, Mr. Comyns Carr said, and that feelingly, "I am glad that we were, for we had walked far enough to pass a resolution that, *Arcades ambo*, no previous entertainment had proved so much to our fancy, or resulted in so much real pleasure to ourselves."

Hugh Conway, who was born in Bristol, December 25th, 1847, died May 15th, 1885, at Monte Carlo, a handsome memorial tablet, executed by Mr. Havard Thomas, the celebrated local sculptor, being erected by public subscription in the Bristol Cathedral.

Death removing three of the most popular and energetic members of the Governing Body—Mr. George Macready Chute and Mr. Mark Barraud in 1888, and Mr. David Bell in 1890—it was decided to close the Arts Club entirely.

MR. MARK BARRAUD was really a good fellow, and although there were, at times, some few who might temporarily have thought otherwise, there were certainly few who did not ultimately regard him as per the opening line. It was that he was an inveterate leg-puller and practical jokist that occasionally brought him into disrepute, yet I only remember one occasion upon which his exploit in the latter direction read as approaching real tragedy, that being when, not calculating the inevitable consequence, he in a chemical fire joke destroyed the contents of a greenhouse of plants. Even in this instance Mr. George Chapman, his immediate neighbour, and whose most cherished ideal—as is so fre-

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## The Bristol Stage

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quently the case in the theatrical world—was the *rus in urbe*, although the unfortunate victim of the outrage, ultimately forgave, “let bygones be have-beens,” and shook hands!

But Barraud was as original in practical joking as with his brush, and I remember an occasion when, meeting two members of a visiting company—strangers to the district—he answered their inquiry as to whether there was “anywhere to go or anything to see during the day?” “Yes,” was his reply, “the Chew Magna regatta,” and forthwith he directed them how to get to the rustic scene. There was another event on similar lines, that occurring when a couple of ardent anglers attached to another company inquired as to the possibility of wetting a line. “Rather,” said Barraud, “and I will join you. We’ll meet here (the Arts Club) to-morrow at eleven o’clock.”

The two visitors turned up armed with rods and other paraphernalia of the cult, and not long afterwards Barraud entered, with rod, fishing creel, etc., in correct position and form, and with really the most extraordinary of head-gear. One matutinal drink, and “’twas time to go,” he said, whilst opening the club room door, but only to be confronted by a boy from the theatre bringing him a telegram. Quickly tearing open the envelope, a look of annoyance clouded his brow. “Dear, dear!” he said. “Well, it can’t be helped; you two go on, get up to Clifton Down station and take tickets for Fishponds. I will follow you. Go to the ‘Full Moon’ hotel. The landlord is one of the best fishermen in the West of England; he will tell you all about it.” And as they were leaving he added, “And order dinner for us at 4.30.”

The joke of both episodes lies in the fact that the river Chew barely affords the width necessary to scull a skiff, let alone any such passing another *en route*, whilst Fishponds, the name of an extreme parish of the city, and however correct some tradition of fish-ponds being situated there may be, it relates to a century or so ago, as there is not a ghost of either pond or river within its boundary!

Probably the most amazing part of the latter incident lay in Barraud’s effrontery in joining the disappointed anglers at the dinner table! What transpired there I do not know, but the three returned to the Arts Club the best of chums, and so continued during that company’s visit. Another thing that I did not know, and that none of the club members ever discovered, that being the place of origin of his piscatorial get-up, for I do not believe that previously he had ever handled a fishing-rod.

There was an occasion upon which Mark Barraud, being knocked up about 2.30 a.m., put his head out of the window, with the inquiry, “Who’s there?”

“Police,” came the reply; “your front door is open.”

“Well, shut it, there’s a good fellow; you don’t want me to come down to do that.”

“But won’t you see that it’s all right, sir?”

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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"Oh! they are welcome to anything they can carry away from here. Good night!"

Yes, Mark Barraud was an extraordinary man! He smoked—occasionally tobacco—but mostly matches!

That as a scenic artist he was possessed of rare ability there is little doubt, and once he painted a canvas—by no means a large one, nor was it a poor effort—and sent it to the Bristol Fine Arts Academy exhibition, but the hanging committee, or, as he termed it, "the committee of hangmen," possibly considering that there was a sufficiency of local artists for on, or near the line of sight, found the effort a place upon the sky-line and almost beyond the vision of the ordinary star-gazer. The artist's fellow club members had some difficulty in persuading him to refrain from inserting the following advertisement in the local Press: "Wanted, a ladder from which to view my picture at the Academy.—Mark Barraud."

Miss Fanny Josephs brought from the St. James's, Stephenson's comedy, "Impulse," amongst her company being Miss Fanny Enson, Helen Cresswell and Maria Daly, as also Mr. Albert Chevalier, C. W. Garthorne and J. H. Darnley.

Mr. Barry Sullivan, in whose company were both Miss Jane and Miss Susan Rignold, drew his customary crowd, and was followed by the comedy "Nita's First," represented by Miss Cora Stuart (Mrs. T. W. Robertson), Miss E. Brunton (Miss E. Robertson), and Messrs. John Rouse, Walter Everard, Charles Thorne and T. W. Robertson.

Messrs. Sims and Pettitt's Adelphi drama "In the Ranks," was introduced, the theatre then being closed until Christmas Eve (Wednesday), 1884, when the pantomime "The Forty Thieves" was produced. Written by Mr. J. Wilton Jones, author of the "Cinderella" pantomime preceding, the book contained a caustic reference to the method adopted by Mr. Justice Manisty of fining jurymen who were not present in court when their names were called. This summary proceeding having caused a flutter throughout the kingdom, afforded a capital subject for pantomime "up-to-dateness." Unfortunately the Bristol Assize came within the sphere of Mr. Justice Manisty. "James Macready Chute!" cried the usher, and repeated the invocation. Alas! silence reigned, and a ten pounds fine ensued.

Miss Maggie Duggan was Ganem, the Brothers Harlow, the donkey, and the Brothers Griffiths, the two driver thieves, others in the cast being Misses Kate Murray, Adelaide Chippendale (Mrs. G. M. Chute), Maud St. Clair, and Messrs. C. K. Chute, Richard Purdon, Leicester Collingwood (a Bristolian who afterwards as an actor "made good"), Messrs. Richard Edgar and others, but beyond the representatives of Ganem, the donkey and its driver, those otherwise engaged were not of the pantomime cult. The annual proved a disappointment, and was withdrawn on February 21st.



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## *The Bristol Stage*

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The eminent and ever welcome comedian, Mr. J. L. Toole, as full of life as ever, and as resourceful in the desire for a practical joke, who followed, was met on arrival by Mr. G. M. Chute, my brother and self. Strolling as far as the George and Railway Hotel for a much-needed drink, luncheon trains not yet being in evidence, a four-wheeler was requisitioned to take us on our way. Tipping the "boots" who had put through the call, Mr. Toole told him not to wait, we being a waiting throng on the hotel steps when the vehicle drew up. "Don't get down," cried J. L. T. to the cabby whilst opening the door, and forthwith his form disappeared inside the commodious "growler." Mr. C. followed, and then my brother. The practical joker, who had immediately opened the opposite door and passed behind the back of the cab, was close behind as I made my entrance, being again closely followed by Mr. Chute and myself, my brother depositing his sixteen stone on the front seat and so blocking the view of the inside from the driver's box. The Jehu now evidently thought it time to see what was going on, but just as I closed the door with a goodly bang, Mr. Toole's head protruded from the further window. "All right, cabby," he cried, "we're all here. Drive to Arts Club." The driver, probably congratulating himself upon his nag not being a "screw," drove as instructed, but looked amazingly puzzled at seeing no more than four passengers alight. "Here you are, cabby," exclaimed Mr. Toole, whilst adding a generous "tip" to the legal fare, "I must pay for those three fellows who got out as we came up the hill!"

Mr. Edward Righton appeared in "Twins." Commencing April 19th, 1885, the romantic play "Young Mrs. Winthrop," which had been so cordially received on production at the Court Theatre, was produced. The company appearing in Park Row was altogether an excellent one, including as it did Mr. J. G. Grahame, Vincent Sternroyd and Alfred Bishop, Miss Alice Ingram, Miss Lottie Venne, Miss Clara Cowper and Miss Josephine Calvert.

The stage on the Thursday afternoon, April 23rd, was occupied by a social gathering. Miss Chute, an accomplished pianist, accompanied by her younger sister, Miss Christine Chute, who was possessed of a fine voice and had received the benefit of tuition by Signor Randegger, were about to take up residence elsewhere than Clifton, and for the purpose of affording accommodation to their legion of friends at an "At Home," her brothers had converted the stage of their theatre into a charming palm and flower-bedecked drawing-room. Upwards of a hundred guests were received, and a delightful concert, in which the two ladies were assisted by Mr. Montague Worlock, Mr. Carrington (violin), and a selected orchestra under the *baton* of Mr. George R. Chapman. The function was in every way a success, and not speedily forgotten by those so fortunate as to be present.

Mr. E. A. Sothern, who followed, infused quite new life into his time-

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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honoured programme, including for the first time the reading of a letter from Brother Sam, when playing as Lord Dundreary, and on the two concluding nights coupling with John Oxenford's farcical comedy "Sam," H. J. Byron's screaming farce "Dundreary Married and Settled." He met with the heartiest receptions throughout the week.

—One of the most welcome of visits was that of Harry Paulton's screaming burlesque, "The Babes ; or, W(h)ines from the Wood," for it introduced such a galaxy of talent as that of Mr. Willie Edouin, Lionel Brough, Harry Fischer, H. Litton, and, amongst the ladies, Miss Alice Atherton, Carlotta Zerbini, Maggie Duggan, and several other well-known artistes. The Babes—the Babes were, of course, personated by Mr. Willie Edouin and his wife, Miss Alice Atherton.

"Called Back" returned and with a strengthened cast, for Mr. Fred Terry now played Gilbert Vaughan and Mr. Bassett Roe, Macari ; Miss Alma Murray, however, again gave her delightful rendering of Pauline. "Falka," with Miss Giulia Warwick, Vere Carew, F. Lytton and a host of charming ladies, together with Messrs Horace Lingard, Lytton Grey, Walker Marnock, Allen Thomas, etc., constituted the programme.

After a week of the "Private Secretary," with Mr. Arthur Helmore giving his admirable rendering of the Rev. Mr. Spalding, his original part, Mr. G. Chute took his benefit, playing Talbot Champneys.

Miss Florence Warden for a week appeared in her own play, the "House on the Marsh," after which the Drury Lane drama "Formosa," by Dion Boucicault, at last saw the footlights here, and went exceedingly well.

**MR. JOHN ROUSE.**—Probably the most versatile of the popular low comedians seen on the Bristol stage, being cast for his original character on production of the play at Drury Lane.

Being an excellent vocalist, very few programmes of the Theatre Royal issued during his tenure here failed to announce as an intermezzo of the two plays customary, "Comic song, Mr. John Rouse."

When in advancing years the popular actor felt like having a more settled home, he applied to the licensing magistrates of Bristol for the transfer of a licence, known for half a century or more as the "Sugar Loaf," by reason of its proximity to a famous sugar refinery. But the refinery in question had been totally destroyed by fire fully a score of years previous to the comedian's application, and the tavern's old title had ceased to be appropriate, so Mr. Rouse was desirous of renaming it "The Gaiety."

The chairman of the Bench on that occasion, a broad-chested, narrow-minded, noncompromising Nonconformist, said : "The magistrates don't mind allowing the transfer, but they object to the name Gaiety."

The solicitor (Mr. J. H. Clifton) appearing for the applicant, in his customary delightful manner explained that the title did not in any way

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## The Bristol Stage

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imply that which his worship probably had in his mind, but was the name of a high-class restaurant and *rendezvous* of the theatrical profession in London.

"Well, the magistrates don't like it! Why 'Gaiety'?"

"Why 'Sugar Loaf'?" interjected the prospective landlord, and nearly lost himself his licence. The argument, however, was unanswerable; so, "Granted," growled "the beak," as though he were pitching offal to a bear.

And that reminds me! At "Ye Olden Fayre" Mr. Rouse turned up garbed in the bear's skin made for the pantomime of "Valentine and Orson," Mr. Mark Barraud, armed with the familiar keeper's pole, conducting his charge amongst the spectators. I fancy that Master Bruin must have received an extra energetic probe, as both bear and keeper shortly sought their dressing tent, returning, however, a little later with the characters reversed. No doubt the popular low comedian had taken his turn with the corrector's weapon!

The curtain now fell for the last time upon the Bristol version of "Uncle Tom," of which character Mr. John Rouse had been the original exponent so far back as 1852. On this occasion the faithful old nigger was presented by Mr. Charles K. Chute, Miss Nellie Bouverie was the Topsy, Mr. W. H. Vernon filling the characters of George Harris and St. Claire. This was a memorable "Good bye" to a drama, dramatized by Bristol skill, which had proved a veritable gold mine to the treasury and must have witnessed during its career something very like a hundred reproductions.

Mrs. Langtry during her six nights' engagement produced a new play written for her by W. G. Wills, and entitled "A Young Tramp," the fair comedienne appearing as Jessie Daw, an actress who in the course of the plot disguises herself as a boy tramp. Up to this night the popular and charming society beauty had never appeared upon the stage in "shorts," and in a little chat I was privileged to have with her immediately before her going on the stage, it is no exaggeration for me to assert "she was as nervous as a kitten." Subsequently she told me that I was quite right in the words of encouragement I had spoken, for I had said, "The audience will be familiar with ladies in boy's clothing, and in ten minutes you will yourself have forgotten that you are so costumed." Mrs. Langtry was accompanied by Mr. Charles Coghlan, Mr. R. D. Lyons and others. Mr. Thomas Thorne's company in "Open House" was succeeded by "The Candidates," for the representation of which Mr. Charles Wyndham sent Miss Mary Moore, Mr. Harry St. Maur, Mr. Alfred Maltby, etc. Then a Carl Rosa week, the operas selected for performance being "Carmen," with "Manon" for the first time, with Madame Marie Roze in the principal characters, "Nadeshda," for the first time in Bristol, with Madame Georgina Burns as *prima donna*, "Mignon," and "Faust," with Madame Julia Gaylord (Mrs. F. C.



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## The Bristol Stage

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Packard) and Mr. F. C. Packard, and "Marriage of Figaro" as a wind-up, with all three *prime donne* in the cast.

Miss Fortescue arrived, accompanied by Misses Kate Hodson, Helen Cresswell, Messrs. Philip Beck and Arthur Wood, in "Frou Frou" and "Pygmalion and Galatea." Then Mr. William Duck's company in Hugh Conway's "Dark Days," Mr. Comyns Carr having again collaborated in the dramatization. It was a good company, and included Miss Florence West, Mrs. Mary Jocelyn and Miss Rose Roberts, Messrs. Lewis Waller, C. W. Somerset, Carter, Charles Macdona, etc. On the opening night the performance was under special patronage.

Pinero's capital farce the "Magistrate," in which appeared Miss Lottie Venne (Mrs. Walter H. Fisher), followed. On the following Monday the performance for the New Boathouse Fund of the Ariel Rowing Club, the "Guv'nor" being played by known local talent, mainly amateur, and Club members. Of these were : Messrs. George Macready Chute, David Bell, Albert Carter, George Bellairs, Robert W. Horne, Lethbridge Beck, A. Scott, Walter Blinkhorn, T. W. Hancock, Walter H. Gange, W. A. Barr, George E. Davies, assisted by Miss Maud Avery, Mary Ellen White, Jane Grey, Gertrude Guillian and Mrs. George Chute. There was a splendid attendance of the public.

"Little Red Riding Hood," the 1885-6 pantomime, was again one of the right sort. Little Cissie Burton proved a delightful Red Riding Hood, and Bo Peep, her sister, Miss Mary Ellen White, followed by her flock of sheep, again quite hit the public taste. Mr. Henry C. Arnold, C. Coleman, Edward J. George and E. S. Gofton proved a powerful crowd of comedians, Misses Kissie Wood, Emily George and other ladies making up an excellent cast. We had Stebb and Trepp, unquestionably *artistes* in their line, and the marvel of the bicycle, Mr. D. J. Canary, was a splendid novelty. Little Levite was the clown. One of the happiest pantomime recollections in my mind is of a matinee to which Messrs. Chute had invited 250 children from the R.C. schools of Pennywell Road, and St. Mary's on the Quay. Dear little ones ! how they laughed and how they applauded ! Their enjoyment acted like a tonic to the company upon the stage, and when each of the mites was supplied, by the kind thought of Mrs. Chute, with a bun and an orange, no happier throng need be looked for in our midst than were those children.

Visited by immense audiences, the pantomime had to be withdrawn, February 27th, 1886.

Mr. J. L. Shine, with "Fits and Starts," was followed by Mr. Edward Terry with Pinero and Byron's comedies, and then came the opera "Erminie," which proved a great draw. It went with immense spirit, for in the cast were Misses Esme Lee, Lizzie Collier, Julia St. George and Carrie Lee Stoye ; Messrs George Marler, W. H. Rawlins, Tom Paulton and other popular comedians.

At Easter Messrs. Chute produced "God Save the Queen," Rennie

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## The Bristol Stage

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Palgrave and Fred Gover's new drama. It was a fine production, and went straight to Astley's, whilst the company included Miss Julia Warden, Rosa Kenny, Alice Yorke and Marie Glynne, with Messrs. E. N. Hallows, E. Major, Fosbrooke, Charles Arnold, Walter H. Fisher and George Macready Chute. Further London engagements had been made, but as "Home Rule" was very much in the air, I received a most kindly written letter from a high authority, asking whether another title might not be used, as there was the possibility of disturbance in the theatres, as the result of "Patriots" agitators' efforts. My brother and myself, being loyal subjects, preferred to withdraw the play from representation.

That this was a bit of bad luck will be realized when I mention that the *Sunday Times* said: "The piece is excellent. The plot is unconventional and interesting, and the dialogue above the average," whilst *The Referee* credited it with "exciting material. Sound and stirring sentiments. Probably the 'fattest' low-comedy part ever seen on any stage"; and *The Sportsman*, "A good interesting dramatic work. Go and see it, dear reader, and if you don't agree with me, well, then I'll take a back seat or an overflow ticket!!" So virtue had to be its own reward, but that it *was* cruel luck for both of us was extensively conceded.

It was at one of the concluding rehearsals of this play when the "call-board" read "Scenes, props, everybody," that Mr. Harry Owen, who had worked really hard to assist in the artistic success, came into contact with the stage-manager (Mr. Charles Arnold). Now the master carpenter is quite an autocrat in his kingdom, and "Harry" was about to lay a new stage, an evidence of the entire confidence of the lessees. So when at the close of the rehearsal of Act 4 Mr. Arnold said, "All right! Set Act 5, please!" Mr. Owen, from amidst some scenery replied, "You must rehearse it in that set, it will take me twenty minutes to set Act 5." But if the master carpenter rules in his own province, the stage-manager is "All Highest," and like "She," must be obeyed.

"Very well," said Mr. Arnold, "twenty minutes' interval, ladies and gentlemen," and the company temporarily dispersed.

"Well!" remarked Harry Owen, as he passed me on the stage, "if that isn't treating a real good mechanic no better than a bally play-actor!"

And therefrom I learnt his appraisalment of the consideration due to each of the two industries.

MR. WALTER HENRY FISHER.—Handsome, debonaire, and possessed of a delightful tenor voice, "Wally" was an immediate favourite with all with whom he came in contact. The son of a Bristol miniature artist, his professional connection with the stage commenced at Plymouth, where, at the Theatre Royal, Mr. J. R. Newcombe was producing Burnand's burlesque "Paris." Shortly afterwards, upon joining Captain Disney Roebuck's U.S.D.C., he met his future wife—Miss Lottie Venne—a lady possessed of all the stage attributes that so

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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distinguished her husband, and upon their entry into the theatrical life of the metropolis, their promise of a career of exceptional success has seldom, if ever, been surpassed by any young artistic couple. Miss Lottie Venne has never ceased to realize this promise until the present day . . . when she still graces the stage !

Mr. Fisher's career for some time equally realized the early promise, and at the Philharmonic, Royalty, Olympic and other theatres he became the original exponent of many notable operatic and dramatic works. By Messrs. Montague, James and Thorne, he was selected for the part of Jack Wyatt ("Two Roses") in the provinces, where also he scored as La Pericole, and as the defendant in "Trial by Jury," with Mlle. Selina Dolaro. With the D'Oyly Carte Company he was exceptionally successful, but it was whilst fulfilling this engagement that he became unreliable.

Twice whilst producing in Bristol, the Brothers Chute and myself came to our old friend's aid—"any part," he said, "if my name can be in the bill to send to Carte." On the first occasion the play, with the exception of the principal character, was already cast, so it was a serious risk—but we took it. In the second event the part was less exacting, but still an important one. Mr. Fisher's impersonation of both characters was delightful, and the appreciation of the local critics convinced Mr. D'Oyly Carte, but the disease was too deeply rooted for permanent cure.

Mr. John S. Clarke, who was accompanied by Messrs. John Vollaire, Richard Purdon, H. Reeves Smith, and others, did excellent business, with his specialities the "Heir-at-Law," "Toodles," etc.

A very great attraction was George R. Sims' and Clement Scott's "Jack in the Box," with Miss Fannie Leslie, in her original part, as played at the Princess's, London. In the cast otherwise were Messrs. J. B. Ashley, J. A. Arnold, Malcolm H. Grahame and "Little Ada Reeves"; "A True Story," Mr. Elliot Galer's company; and for Whitsuntide, "The Guv'nor," with a benefit on the Friday for Mr. Mark H. Barraud, when he made "his first appearance as an actor on any stage," playing the part of Capt. Wilton in "Ruth's Romance." The "Magistrate" followed, but not necessarily on account of Mr. Mark Barraud's new rôle.



## CHAPTER XVII

A.D. 1886

**A** NEW STAGE.—During the summer recess that important feature of a theatre, the stage, had been entirely re-laid upon the most modern and artistic lines and with the introduction of the most recent inventions.

First to tread the new boards was Bristol's old favourite, Mr. William Rignold, he appearing as "Adam Bede," in which character he gave a further taste of his admitted charm as a violin player. Mr. Hubert O'Grady followed with the Irish drama, "The Famine," and next came Mrs. Weldon in "Not Alone," a play written by herself and George Lander, and dealing with the Lunacy laws. "Harbour Lights" was well staged and proved attractive, giving way to Miss Amy Steinberg in a "Bitter Wrong," which, in turn, was succeeded by an old member of the Bristol company, Mr. F. A. Scudamore, with his own play "First Class."

The Vaughan-Conway Company, which appeared on September 13th, was a powerful one, for it embraced Misses Kate Vaughan, Fanny Coleman, Marie Illington and Woolgar-Mellon, the last-named being the daughter of the favourite Adelphi actress, and her husband, Mr. Alfred Mellon, the musical conductor of that theatre, and of opera a composer. There were also in the cast Messrs. H. B. Conway, William Farren, Wilford Morgan, Mark Kinghorne, Charles Collette, etc.

"The Man with Three Wives," from the Criterion, brought Mr. Cyril Maude, the following week being devoted to "Vetah," an opera by Messrs. Bernical and Jacobi, of which Miss Kate Santley had provided the libretto, and in which she sustained the name part, an Indian maiden. In the cast were also Messrs. De Lange, Michael Dwyer, Robert Courtneidge, Charles Stevens and Lionel Rignold.

The Carl Rosa Company played a most successful week, the chief feature of which was the first appearance here of Mr. Edward Scovel, who appeared in both "Carmen" and "Lohengrin."

Miss Marie De Grey next introduced "Jane Shore" (the King's Favourite), the new play with which I had furnished her, in the writing of which I had secured the collaboration of Mr. J. W. Boulding, a past-master of blank verse, and who in writing of the "White Rose" and other

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## The Bristol Stage

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plays had secured an enviable reputation. Our play was first produced at the Royal Court Theatre, Liverpool. Miss De Grey was surrounded by a capable company, of whom Miss Maud Digby and Mrs. Ernest Clifton, Messrs. Matthew Brodie, Bassett Roe, A. T. Hilton and E. Charles were the principals. Miss Nelly Farren and Mr. Fred Leslie appeared in "Little Jack Sheppard," whilst "On Change" was followed for twelve nights by the Drury Lane drama "Human Nature," with the Drury Lane scenery. The pantomime was "Sinbad the Sailor," J. F. McArdle's unrivalled scenario being brought up to date by Mr. Harry F. McClelland, who played the part of Capt. Scuttle. Miss Ada Blanche was Sinbad, Miss Addie Blanche the Princess, Miss Edith Blanche, Yazora, and Miss Flora Hastings, Zorilda. Mr. George Walton was now the Tinbad, the Leglere family were in the cast and harlequinade, and greatest attraction of all, Lieut. Walter Cole gave in the Palace scene his splendid ventriloquial entertainment.

Mr. G. M. Chute took his benefit on the concluding night, February 26th, and in addition to giving an admirable performance in the farce "My Turn Next" and his customary annual address, during the Palace and following scene of the pantomime, he took Mr. Chapman's seat as conductor of the orchestra. This evening of remarkable versatility on his part constituted his last stage appearance.

George Hawtrey's comedy, the "Pickpocket," followed by Mr. Edmund Tearle, with Miss Kate Clinton (Mrs. Tearle), in Shakesperean plays, then Willie Edouin's company in "Turned Up" carried the season to March 21st, when there was one of those *rara avis* announcements to be found only in the world of amusements, and on this occasion taking the form of "Farewell Visit of D'Oyly Carte's Opera Company in the 'Mikado.'" I can't say whether the public believed it or not, but there were splendid houses throughout the week. The American drama "Passion's Slave" was staged, this being followed by the Olympic drama "Alone in London."

Needless to say, Edgar Bruce's original company and production of "Alice in Wonderland," by way of being a great novelty, proved a big success. Miss Mabel Love, Miss Phoebe Carlo, and Mlle. Rosa shared with Messrs. Stephen Addison, Sidney Harcourt and H. C. Payne, the chief toil.

During Queen Victoria's "Jubilee Week"! the performance commenced each evening with the full company singing the National Anthem, after which came Mr. Henry Hamilton's play "Harvest." There was a good company, amongst the principals being Miss Olga Nethersole and Miss Adria Hill, together with Messrs. J. H. Darnley, C. W. Garthorne, John Benn, Nicol Pentland and Scott Buist. "Ruddigore" came for the last week of the spring season.

Mr. Charles Arnold, a delightful American comedian and vocalist, who had already established a most desirable reputation as the original

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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Tony in "My Sweetheart," opened the autumn season with "Hans the Boatman," and then Mrs. Bernard-Beere paid her first visit, "As in a Looking Glass" being the play produced. Misses Muriel Aubrey, Eva Sothern, Ashford and Marie Wynter, Messrs. Herbert Standing, Bucklaw, Arthur Marcel and M. Marius supported the famous tragedienne. Mr. Charles Dornton brought Mr. William Rignold for his original part of Jaques in the "Two Orphans," after which George R. Sims' Princess's drama, the "Romany Rye," was introduced to a Bristol audience.

The Carl Rosa Company opened with "Carmen," introducing Miss Fanny Moody and Mr. Francesco Runcio. The second night was devoted to the production of "Nordisa," written and composed for the company by F. Corder; and on Saturday (October 8th) was performed for the first time in this country Victor Masse's "Galatea," with Madame Marie Roze in the title rôle, and Mr. F. H. Celli as Pygmalion.

Mr. Wilson Barrett, with Miss Eastlake, produced "Chatterton," "Clito," etc., followed by the opera "Dorothy," which proved most popular upon this, its introduction here.

Mr. Willie Edouin and Miss Alice Atherton in "Katti," and with them Mr. Albert Chevalier, Miss Dolores Drummond, Laura Sedgwick, etc., after which came three nights with Mr. J. H. Mapleson's Italian Opera Company.

The pantomime of 1887-8, "The Babes in the Wood," was the last Christmas production of the joint-management; and was, moreover, the last with the scenic success of which was associated the name of Mr. Mark Barraud, both he and Mr. George Macready Chute being already seriously incapacitated by the illnesses which shortly afterwards proved fatal in both instances. Each, however, had taken some part in the preparation of this annual, the department of Mr. Barraud being strengthened by scenes executed by Messrs. T. E. Ryan, Thos. W. Hall and J. Barry Parker, the latter now being appointed the resident scenic artist. The "Babes" went with spirit until February 18th, Miss Amy Grundy as Robin Hood; Miss Retta Walton, Allan A'Dale; Miss Emma Broughton, Maid Marion; Messrs. Clarence Hague and George Minshull, the ruffians; and Mr. Fred Walton, Mumps; all working with a will.

Messrs. Van Biene and Horace Lingard gave us the first taste of Lecocq's latest opera "Pepita," Miss Guilia Warwick being in the title rôle and Messrs. Horace Lingard and Louis Kellerer, Inigo and Pedrillo respectively, after which the Drury Lane drama "Pleasure" held the bill. Mr. Willie Edouin sent a company with "Turned Up," a farcical comedy by Mark Melford, the following week being occupied on the Tuesday and Wednesday, March 27th and 28th, with special performances in aid of the Mark Barraud Fund.

These performances were organized by his fellow-members of the Arts



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## *The Bristol Stage*

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Club, Mr. J. M. Chute acting as general manager and treasurer, Mr. Charles Arnold stage-manager, Mr. George Chapman musical conductor, and Mr. Fred Gover Powell Hon. Secretary. A single night would have proved inadequate to the accommodation of those desirous of being present, and would have also been insufficient to give opportunity to those desirous of lending their aid upon the stage. The brothers Chute and the entire staff, both before and behind the curtain, had already volunteered their free assistance, theatre or services for two nights.

The *Mercury*, *Times and Mirror*, and *Daily Press* proprietors made no charge for the advertisements, Messrs. Billing & Co., Jarrett & Co., and Read & Co., posted all the announce-bills without expense, Messrs. William Lewis and Son (*Bristol Mercury*) made no charge for the printing, the Bristol United Gas Co. provided the gas free, Mr. E. Coathupe (Chief Constable) presented the services of the police, and Messrs. Duck, Son & Pinker kindly lent the fine concert grand-piano, whilst the whole of the *artistes* gave their services without expense.

The programme of the former date commenced with the farce "Turn Him Out," Dr. Lionel Weatherly playing Necodemus Nobbs; Mr. Lethbridge Beck, Mackintode Moke; Mr. George Minshull, Eglantine Roseleaf; Miss Sibyl Claridge, Julia; and Miss Lottie King, Susan. The farce was succeeded by a delightful musical melange, in which the Countess Ali Sadowski, Mr. F. M. Mansfield and R. Elliott were the vocalists, Messrs. Theo. Carrington, F. L. Leibich and Andrew Waite the instrumentalists. The 3rd and 4th Acts of "As You Like It" followed, Miss de Grey appearing as Rosalind; Mr. Luigi Lablache, Orlando; Mr. W. Fosbrooke, Touchstone; Mr. G. F. Wight, Corin; the characters of Sylvius and Celia being represented by Mr. H. E. Parnell and Mr. G. J. Hale. The Bristol Operatic Society finely rendered some favourite glees, the members of the Bristol Histrionic Society bringing the evening to a close with a capital rendering of Acts 3 and 4 of Tom Taylor's drama, "The Ticket-of-Leave Man."

On the Wednesday "The Weavers" was played as the opening item, and was again succeeded by a musical melange, Miss Maud Bennett and Mr. Theo Carrington delighting with a duo for pianoforte and violin, of airs from "William Tell." Mr. W. Hogarth, Dr. Lionel Weatherly and Miss Christine Chute each contributed songs, and Mr. Edward Fletcher a recitation. "The Happy Man" had the following excellent cast:—Paddy Murphy, Mr. Shiel Barry; Ram Rusti, Mr. W. Hogarth; Foxi Fufm, Mr. R. Smith; Shi Hi, Mr. F. W. Irwin; Run Phaster, Mr. G. I. Hale; Ko Ket, Miss Lottie King.

Members of the Arts Club winding up the proceedings with the Trial Scene "Bardell v. Pickwick:—Mr. Sergeant Buzfuz, Mr. G. Rennie Powell; Mr. Sergeant Snubbin, Mr. Chas. K. Chute; Mr. Justice Stareleigh, Mr. Fred Neebe; Clerk of the Court, Mr. G. F. Wight; Sam Weller, Mr. Geo. Minshull; Winkle, Mr. Lethbridge Beck; Crier, Mr.

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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R. C. Smith ; Old Weller, Mr. F. W. Irwin ; Pickwick, Mr. Arthur ; Foreman of the Jury, Mr. F. M. Mansfield ; Mrs. Cluppins, Mr. W. Fosbrooke.

Wilson Barrett's play, "The Golden Ladder," was next seen, Miss Lingard accompanied by Mr. Frank Kemble Cooper, following with "Camille," "Adrienne Lecouvreur," and for her benefit, on Friday, "Cymbeline." A dramatic version of the story by Fergus Hume, then in everybody's hand, "The Mystery of a Hansom Cab," was brought by Mr. Balsir Chatterton, with his full production from the Princess's, and attracted good houses.

Miss Julia Gaylord and Mr. F. C. Packard having seceded from the Carl Rosa Company, brought a good dramatic combination, producing "Colleen Bawn" and "Frou Frou."

The D'Oyly Carte Company produced a capital little operetta by Cellier, libretto by F. Deprez, entitled "The Carp." "Siberia" from the Princess's, for six nights, after which the Gaiety Company in "Miss Esmeralda," played by the Misses Ada Blanche, Florence Dysart, Aline Lambert, Messrs. E. J. Lonnen, George Stone, Charles Ross, etc., and an extra liberal supply of fair *corps de ballet*.

"Falka," with Miss Wadman in her original character, and supported by Mr. Allen Thomas and others, was followed by that excellent farcical comedy "The Barrister," our old favourite, Mr. W. H. Rawlins, being seen to great advantage in the title *rôle*, and on the following Monday was a complimentary benefit to Mr. George Macready Chute, admirably arranged for him in his absence by his brother and joint-manager. The programme constituted an entire change from his customary benefit night, consisting as it did of the opera "The Bohemian Girl." The cast was as follows :—Arline, Miss Julia Gaylord ; Queen of the Gipsies, Madame Telma ; Thaddeus, Mr. Henry Walsham ; Count Arnheim, Mr. Montague Worlock ; Florestan, Mr. Ambrose Collins ; Devilshoof, Mr. Aynsley Cook. The chorus being supplied by the ladies and gentlemen of the Bristol Operatic Society.

The patronage which Mr. Chute was enabled to announce, together with the large audience, provided a still further tribute to the great esteem in which their family had for so many years been held by their fellow-citizens.

The brief note I received from him on leaving his native shore. It was taken by the pilot from the steamship at the last moment, and, as officially endorsed, posted by him at Plymouth. Above the well-known signature were the two fateful words "Good Bye !" How often between that date and August did I wish that he had at least said "*Au revoir*, and not Good Bye."

MR. GEORGE MACREADY CHUTE.—The third son of Mr. J. H. Chute, born at Alfred Street, Bath, the then residence of his parents, on

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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March 20th, 1851. Educated at the Bristol Grammar School and the College which Dr. Hudson (head master of the Grammar School) subsequently founded at Manilla Hall, Clifton. His earliest leaning was to a "life on the ocean wave," and he spent some little time in the Mercantile Marine service, severing his connection therewith at the desire of his parents, and assisting them in the management of the Theatre Royal, of which, upon the death of their father, he and his younger brother assumed control; he devoting his attention to the stage.

During the rehearsal of "Amy Robsart," produced by Mr. and Mrs. Rousby in 1872, he had the misfortune to break his ankle.

In December, 1873, Mr. G. M. Chute first appeared on the stage as Hugh de Bras, in "A Regular Fix," and during the fourteen ensuing years of his career as an actor had given unmistakable evidence of both dramatic skill and versatility.

An amusing situation occurred when on an occasion he played Dandie Dinmont to Sims Reeves Guy Mannering. The great tenor had sung his song in the wood scene and given his "Hulloa!" Dandie Dinmont cue to enter. But the audience, as usual, insisting upon an encore, Mr. Reeves gave the "Pilgrim of Love," and with the beautiful mellow notes made his exit. Dandie Dinmont, from well off the stage, approached the footlights with the exclamation, which was indeed his part, "Where's that fellow that was holloaing here just now?" The house fairly rocked with laughter, followed by a rousing round of hand-clapping and cries of "bravo!"

A favourite part with Mr. George Chute was that of Tom Meredith in "Flying Scud," Mr. George Thorne being Old Boots, and in this performance both were seen at Astley's Theatre, London, and in several provincial centres.

Elected president of the Arts Club, of which he had been an active promoter, Mr. Chute, of breezy and splendid physique, purposeful, was also an ardent lover of all out of door pastimes or occupations, he being amongst the earliest of the members of the Ariel Rowing Club, and of the Naval Volunteer Reserve, in which force he attained the rank of 2nd Lieutenant, and subsequently resigning that branch of the service, he joined the 1st Gloucestershire Rifles, and therein attained similar rank.

Initiated into Freemasonry in February, 1885, he was at the time of his death S.D. in the Jerusalem Lodge, of which his father, and subsequently his brother became W.M.

Up to the autumn, 1887, Mr. Chute had maintained his well-known robust appearance, but at this time a serious and cruelly neglected cold led to lung troubles, and Dr. Shingleton Smith ordered him to Davos Platz.

But little good resulting, he returned to England, although not to Bristol, and on May 18th, 1888, the popular joint-manager of the Prince's sailed from Plymouth on a visit to his elder brother, Dr. Henry Chute,



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## *The Bristol Stage*

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at King William's Town, South Africa, and there died, on August 15th, at the early age of thirty-seven years.

Having in 1884 married Miss Adelaide Chippendale, Mr. G. M. Chute left one daughter, Mazzarina.

In the Church of St. Stephen will be seen a beautiful window in stained glass, designed by Mr. Havard Thomas, and erected on the initiative of the Arts Club, Mr. Chute having attended this church with considerable regularity, and frequently reading "the lessons" during the services there.

## CHAPTER XVIII

A.D. 1888

**M**R. JAMES MACREADY CHUTE, as sole proprietor and manager, abandoning local dramatic productions, relied entirely upon touring companies—of which there was now no scarcity—with pantomimes, for his future *menu*. In this latter branch of theatrical fare he achieved remarkable success, proving exceptionally keen in his search for new and desirable stage talent, and possessing unquenchable energy as regarded *mise-en-scène*.

The reopening, on September 10th, 1888, revealed Mr. Arthur Roberts, with Misses Julia Warwick and Annie Halford, in the "Old Guard," Carl Rosa Company producing "La Juive," "Little Lord Fauntleroy"; next "Jim the Penman," with Mr. D'Estrae Guinness, and then the Kendals, producing on one evening Mrs. Campbell-Praed's play "The Two Friends," whilst Mr. Wilson Barrett introduced us to "Ben-my-Chree."

The Bristol Histrionic Society, on behalf of the Commercial Travelers' Benevolent Institution, played "Henry Dunbar," characters being undertaken by Messrs. Frank Gibaud, Arthur Varley, Spencer Ford, A. J. Baker and Harry Eastwood.

"Robinson Crusoe," Miss Grace Huntley singing "White Wings," on a raft, and "Cuchee Coo" at the footlights, will not readily be forgotten by those who witnessed it, and until February 23rd, 1889, they had the opportunity of doing so.

On March 11th Mons. Maurius produced for the first time on any stage Procida Bucalossi's opera "Delia." M. Maurius, who was at the Prince's whilst the fire-curtain question was being discussed, remarked, "Ah! yes. All fly, from the stage and from the seats. All, except the man who has to let down the fireproof curtain! Where is that hero? I would not do it."

D'Oyly Carte Company, with "Yeomen of the Guard," for the first time here, and the inimitable Mr. George Thorne as Jack Point. Grundy's "Arabian Nights," and then Pettitt and Grundy's "Bells of Hazle-mere," Mr. Chas. K. Chute as John Silkstone, and a return of the "Yeomen of the Guard," with Mr. Walter H. Fisher as Leonard Meryll.

Following upon the improvement in exits, etc., considerable altera-







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## *The Bristol Stage*

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tions now preceded the great reconstruction scheme of 1902, the handsome entrance, lift-seats in the upper circle, etc., being carried out during the recess of 1889.

On Thursday, August 1st, Miss Wallis commenced a three nights' engagement with "As You Like It." During the rehearsals of this favourite play, in London, Mr. John Ryder being the producer and our old fellow-citizen, Mr. Charles Arnold, stage-manager, Miss Wallis, with a probable eye to the picturesque, suggested to Mr. Arnold that it would be nice, if in the Forest of Arden the characters could take their refreshment under and about the trees, rather than in the conventional manner. "I hardly know," replied Mr. Arnold, dubiously, "you see, it is a Shakespearean direction 'a table set out,' but if you wish I will ask Mr. Ryder." "Yes, please do," responded the fair tragedienne. Mr. Ryder, at that time accredited the foremost place as producer of such plays, was likewise famous for a vocabulary of language more forcible than polite. In fact, he probably had but one compeer in either capacity, Mr. Charles Harris, whose productions ran on different lines. So Mr. Arnold crossed to the other side of the stage, where Mr. Ryder was giving some instructions, and repeated the idea expressed by Miss Wallis. "Certainly not! it's not a blinking picnic," replied Mr. Ryder, or in words to that effect. Mr. Arnold, returning to the fair Rosalind, purposed saying "Mr. Ryder does not think it would be popular," but before he was enabled to utter a syllable, Miss Wallis remarked, "That's the worst of Mr. Ryder, he is so rude!" The lady "star" had overheard the lurid comment on her suggestion, from the lips of her producer!

On Bank Holiday Miss Bella Pateman with two old friends of ours, i.e. Mr. Russell Crawford and Mr. Robert Nelson, produced for the first time here Sims & Pettitt's drama "Master and Man," the same authors' "In the Ranks" following. That very excellent Shakespearean actor, Mr. Osmond Tearle, was responsible for a capital week of repertoire, after which came a novelty, the Carl Rosa *light* opera company, producing "Paul Jones," a delightful work, by Planquette, and represented by an excellent company, headed by Miss Camille D'Arville and Mr. Michael Dwyer.

Van Biene and Lingard's company provided Offenbach's opera "Fal-sacappa," done into English as "The Brigands," this being prior to its production at the Avenue Theatre, London. The company contained Mlle. Agnes Delaporte and Misses Geraldine St. Maur, Daisy Baldry and Marie Luella, with Messrs. Hallen Mostyn, Horace Lingard, George Honey, Frank Wensley and R. Morand; Mr. W. C. Levey conducted the augmented orchestra. Sydney Grundy's farcical comedy "Mamma" followed, there being as exponents Mrs. George Loveday and Messrs. John Bannister, Percy Meynall, George Cecil Murray, etc.

The Carl Rosa Company, introducing Meyerbeer's "*L'Etoile du Nord*," with Miss Georgina Burns, "*Lohengrin*," with Mr. Barton Mc-

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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Guckin, and "Carmen" with Mlle. Zelig de Lussan, in the principal characters, came next.

Mr. Charles Sugden, as Dr. Glynn, in the breezy farcical comedy "The Balloon," Mr. Thomas Thorne, with Mr. Cyril Maude, and Miss Sylvia Hodson, in "Joseph's Sweetheart," and then Mr. and Mrs. T. W. Robertson, in Pinero's masterpiece "Sweet Lavender."

Mr. J. L. Toole brought us two new plays, "The Don," and "The Butler," and still this prince of jokers was not happy in his repertoire. "What I want," he said, "to take to Australia, is something with a snap!" "A snap, how do you mean?" came the question. "Well, something on these lines. A newly married couple return from the honeymoon and settle in a strange flat. During the evening the husband is called out by telephone, and says that he may be late in returning. He isn't! Opening the door with his latch-key, the low turned light in the apartment is still sufficient to reveal the embracing forms upon the couch. "My wife," he cries, "in the arms of another man!" and drawing his revolver, shoots both dead! Turning on the light to gaze upon his work, he starts back in horror, "Great heavens," he cries, "*the wrong flat!*"

"Cinderella" was a pantomime that caught on immediately, and by March 1st, 1890, when it was compulsorily given a back seat, it had been witnessed by upwards of 150,000 people. Miss Nellie Murray was Cinderella, Miss Fanny Wentworth the prince, and Miss Emily Lyndale Dandini. Male characters were in the hands of Messrs. J. W. Handley, Fred Williams, Edwin Barwick, and that prince of comedians, then in his early days, Mr. Edmund Payne, who played Peter. Everybody was delighted, but the proud manager, in the course of his little speech, said that next year he hoped to go one better, and in response to the cry "You can't!" replied "I'll try!"

Mr. J. H. Grahame appeared in Tree's success "A Man's Shadow" (this being its first provincial production) on March 3rd, 1890, and later came Mr. John Hart's opera company with "Carina."

On the afternoon of April 22nd, 1890, there was a delightful reunion enjoyed by the social circle of Mrs. James Macready Chute, who had transferred her "At Home" from her residence at Abbeymeade to the more available scene afforded by the Prince's, and upwards of one hundred guests were enabled to admire the beautifully arranged and palm bedecked drawing-room into which the stage had been converted. A quite attractive programme of music had been arranged, Miss Kate Payne, Miss Christine Chute, and Mr. Montague Worlock each contributing vocal numbers, Mr. Theo. Carrington violin solos, and Miss Chute a concerto for violin and orchestra, the latter composed of selected executants under the direction of Mr. George R. Chapman. Among the guests then present was Miss Clara Butt, who delighted both hostess and fellow guests by favouring them with a song.



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## *The Bristol Stage*

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Mr. Arthur Roberts brought his company in "Guy Fawkes, Esq.," and Mr. Richard Edgar his company in "Aunt Jack," whilst Miss Minnie Palmer in "My Sweetheart" closed the season until Whitsuntide, when "My Jack" occupied the stage. "The Bungalow," with Miss Edith Rosenthal and Miss Sallie Turner, Messrs. Sidney Harcourt, R. Cecil Beryl, Henry Dana and Fred Wright, junr., followed; and next came "The Red Hussar," followed by F. A. Scudamore's "Dangers of London." Commend me to Mr. Scudamore for striking titles, others of his that I remember being "Rags and Bones" and "Scithors to Grind!" D'Oyly Carte's Company with the "Gondoliers" brought us on June 23rd, 1899, our fellow-citizen Mr. George Temple, he being the Duke of Plaza-Tora.

Mr. Augustus Harris's burlesque company, which appeared on September 29th, contained quite a galaxy of stars, these being Lady Dunlo, Misses Grace Huntley, Agnes Delaporte, Kitty Loftus, Daisy Baldry, Alice Lethbridge, Violet Malvern and Alice Carlton, together with Messrs. Victor Stevens, Harry Fischer, Whimsical Walker and Nicholas Carter. The burlesque "Venus," which they introduced, was magnificently staged and proved very attractive. How much of the success was due to the presence of "Our Gracie" in the cast I cannot say, but from her nightly reception I can with confidence regard her as a tidy make-weight, for the tuneful numbers provided by Mr. John Crook notwithstanding, the audience still wanted to hear her pantomime ditties, and so she introduced "Cuchee-coo."

Miss Huntley, mayhap, was influenced as were a pair of "knock-about" a few years earlier in our history! A couple of jingling rhyme lines had been entrusted them in order to bring their act into the picture, but even strenuous Brandon Hill study failed to fix them in their minds. "Look'ee here, boss," said one of them, "they lines are a bit clas'cal! We don't touch the clas'cal. If you want a success, take my tip, get right away from the clas'cal. There's nothing, you bet, clas'cal in our show!" There wasn't! If I remember rightly, they calmly "stepped" from roofs and house fronts some fifteen feet high, on to the stage, much as one would step from one ordinary stair to another, and as they had suggested, though not "clas'cal" they were quite a success.

The Carl Rosa Company, now under the managerial direction of Messrs. Augustus Harris and H. Bruce, with Mr. T. H. Friend as manager, Messrs. E. Goossens and Claude Jaquinot conductors, and H. Brooklyn as stage-manager, in the first week of their engagement gave two performances of Gounod's "Romeo and Juliet," and during the second week produced Frederick Cowen's original opera "Thorgrim," the composer occupying the conductor's seat in the orchestra, both of these works being performed by the company for the first time.

"Faust up to Date," Van Biene's company, proved very popular, Mr. Edmund Payne playing Mephistopheles; Mr. Louis Kelleher, Valentine;

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## The Bristol Stage

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Miss Flo Bilton, Faust ; and Miss Amy Augarde, Marguerite. Miss Kate Vaughan was here with "John Jasper's Wife" and "How it Happened," from November 10th to 15th ; "Ruy Blas" burlesque, with music by Meyer Lutz, Miss Ada Blanche in the title rôle, Miss May Chichester the Queen, and Miss Gomez Sandrez, drew good houses, after which Mr. Ben Greet appeared as the Abbe Dubois, in "The Village Priest," a play by Sydney Grundy, and on December 24th Mr. Chute produced his pantomime. "Aladdin" had been the subject of the first Park Row pantomime, since which scenic display and other details had made a great advance, and Mr. Chute had expressed the hope that he might "go one better" than even the success of the previous Christmas. That he did so, there were none to deny. Those who remember "Wink the Other Eye" will conjure up Miss Grace Huntley as Aladdin. Mr. H. C. Arnold was the Widow, Miss Elsie Irving princess, and Miss Violet Evelyn, with her delightful banjo playing, was a most popular Pekoe.

"Our Flat," and Alice Atherton in "Our Daughters," were followed by "Faust up to Date," with Misses Rita Presano, Alice Burnett, Amy Augarde and Amy Broughton ; Messrs. Edmund Payne and Louis Kellerher. May 4th, Mark Melford's "Flying from Justice," with Miss Augusta Haviland as Mrs. Bearing.

"Bootle's Baby," Miss Maggie Bowman being in her original part, was here on June 1st ; and the Carl Rosa Light Opera Company produced Walter Slaughter's opera "Marjorie" on the 8th, "The Royal Oak," from Drury Lane, which followed, being represented by an excellent company.

During the autumn of 1891 *L'Enfant Prodigue* was produced here, but this was, as yet, hardly provincial fare, more popularity being secured by the three-act farce "Jane," with Miss Nemmie Hall and Mr. J. G. Grahame.

On September 21st Mr. Henry Irving and Miss Ellen Terry paid a welcome visit, producing "Ravenswood" and "Nance Oldfield," Miss Terry's son—Mr. Gordon Craig—being in the company, as were also Mr. Terris, Mr. Alfred Bishop, Mr. Haviland and Miss Amy Roselle, the three last named *artistes* giving an especial Bristol flavour to an otherwise strongly Bristol cast.

An excellent three-act farce, "The Solicitor," followed, the author, Mr. J. H. Darnley, appearing in the title rôle. Miss Kate Vaughan again appeared in the "Dancing Girl," but with an introduced dance, for its title had misled numbers who had previously gone to see the famous dancer and had been disappointed at finding no Terpsichorean effort on view.

The Carl Rosa Company performed for the first time in Bristol not only Balfe's opera "The Talisman," but Auber's "Le Domino Noir." The Gaiety burlesque "Miss Esmeralda" was in the hands of Little Florence, as Quasimodo, Misses Madge Rockingham, Maggie Duggan,

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## The Bristol Stage

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Marion Huntley, Lila Doyle and others, with Messrs. James Danvers, Clifford Campbell and Wellesley Smith. It was a thoroughly appreciated programme. "A Million of Money" from Old Drury was succeeded by the burlesque "Ruy Blas," and that by "Orpheus and Eurydice." Mr. J. L. Shine was Orpheus, and Miss Grace Huntley, Eurydice.

Mr. Wm. Calder drew capital houses to witness his famous representation of "Rip Van Winkle," whilst, during the following week, Mr. Wilson Barrett added to his *repertoire*, by the first performance on any stage of "Jenny the Barber," a comedietta from his pen, in which Miss Maud Jefferies appeared. The Bristol Histrionic had a special night, after which the theatre closed for rehearsal of Geoffrey Thorne's pantomime "Dick Whittington," 1900.

Miss Marie Luella was the hero and Mr. Ted Lauri a remarkable exponent of the Cat, Mr. W. H. Rawlins an exceptionally good Alderman, and Mr. Edmund Payne at his very best as Idle Jack. Miss Mabel Allen, Alice, making a huge hit with "Ta-ra-raa-boom-de-ay," and in the still essential knock-about business, Messrs. Ludlow and Clark were "all there!" The harlequinade, a somewhat moth-eaten item now, was, however, unusually bright, being well devised by Drury Lane's clown, Mr. Ted Lauri, senr. Dick Whittington continued to "turn again" until March 5th, 1892, after which came the ever welcome D'Oyly Carte Company, now including Misses Margaret Cockburn, Dorothy Vane and Kate Forster, with Messrs. George Thorne, Richard Clarke, Fred Billington, Thomas Redmond, etc.; and during this visit the company produced Edward Solomon's Indian opera the "Nautch Girl" in the lyrics of which our whilom fellow-citizen Frank Desprez had a hand.

On March 28th an admirable company appeared in that delightful opera "La Cigale," and the following week Miss Florence St. John, as "La Mascotte," occupied the first three evenings, the latter part of the week being devoted to Planquette's comedy opera, "Rip Van Winkle," Mr. Auguste Van Biene appearing as Rip and Miss Florence St. John as Gretchen; Mr. George Honey was likewise in the cast.

"The Young Recruit" proved quite an amusing opera, as manipulated by Mr. John Crook, and as represented by Messrs. Harry Nicholls, J. L. Shine, etc., with Miss Wadman (the young recruit), Miss Effie Clements, and other capable *artistes*. The "New Wing," "Joan of Arc" burlesque, and the "Late Lamented" farce, followed in turn.

A splendidly successful week succeeded, the Renads appearing in their absurdity "*Le Voyage en Suisse*," and on the last evening, June 25th, 1892, Mr. Chute took his benefit, Miss Clara Cooper and Mr. J. C. Grahame appearing in "Marriage Bells," "Teddy" Payne giving the panto song, "What 'cher, knocked 'em in the Hotwell Road," and the Renads concluding the programme.

Miss Emily Augarde and Mr. Edmund Payne appeared in "Carmen up to Date." "Niobe, all Smiles" followed, Gilbert and Cellier's opera



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## *The Bristol Stage*

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the "Mountebanks" succeeding; but neither the author without Sullivan, nor the latter without his librettist ever met with any full measure of success here in opera.

Haddon Chambers' "Idler," with Miss Fairbrother, Miss Florence Cowell and Mr. Charles Cartwright, preceded the Carl Rosa Company, producing for the first time here Bizet's "Diaméle," Mascagni's "Cavalleria Rusticana," Meyerbeer's "Prophet," Verdi's "L'Amice Fritz," and the last-named composer's "Aida," finely staged.

Mr. F. R. Benson gave a striking production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream," extra musicians and a full choir being brought into requisition. Mr. H. Beerbohm Tree followed, and accompanied by Mrs. Tree, Mrs. E. H. Brooke, Misses Rose Le Clerq, Henrietta Leverett and Lily Hanbury, Messrs. H. Kemble, Fred Terry and others of the Haymarket Theatre, produced "Peril," "The Dancing Girl," "The Ballad-monger," and "Hamlet."

Mr. John Hare was accompanied by Miss Kate Rorke and Mr. Charles Groves, the programme including "A Quiet Rubber," "A Fool's Paradise," "The Cronies," etc., the Burns-Crotty Opera Company following with "Cinderella."

The ever-popular nursery story, "Babes in the Wood," formed the subject of the pantomime 1892-3, a remarkable feature of the production being the representation of the "Babes" by the Sisters Webster, two young ladies of from seventeen to twenty years of age, and perfectly developed save in stature, but possessed of the apparent physique and facial appearance of children of six to seven years only. Their knowledge of stagecraft and their vocal powers made the performance quite unique, and it formed a topic of conversation in all quarters throughout the run of the pantomime. To dissociate them from the "babes" they represented was by no means an easy accomplishment, and on an occasion, one of the pantomime ladies of normal proportions said in the green-room, "I wish you children would not talk so much!" "Children!" responded one of the midgets, "children do not have these," indicating her nicely developed chest, "and children don't get married next April, as I am going to do!"

The pantomime was, however, cast with exceptional strength throughout, and gave an early indication of the study of the round peg in the round hole which characterized many of Mr. J. M. Chute's pantomimes in the days to come. There were Misses Grace Huntley, Marie Montrose, Flo Doyne, Lily Landon, Janet Lloyd, Fanny Wright, and Hettie Chattell, with Messrs. Chas. E. Stevens ("Pity to Waste it"), George Honey and J. Williams, Fred Eastman and Walter Summers, "the man who broke the Bank at Monte Carlo." The sylvan scenery by Mr. W. R. Coleman, and "Toyland" with its ballet of dolls, by Mr. G. D. Hall, were nightly occasions of popular demonstration, the pantomime running till 4th March, 1893.

## CHAPTER XIX

A.D. 1893

**L**IBERTY HALL," with Mr. J. C. Grahame and Mr. Robert Brough, proved very attractive in March ; at Easter, Miss Marie Montrose and Mr. C. E. Stevens were here in "Bonnie Boy Blue," and following them, Henry Arthur Jones's play, "The Middleman," was staged. Van Biene in the "Broken Melody" attracted large audiences, and the season closed with "Haddon Hall."

In August Miss Cissie Grahame introduced her triple-bill venture, "The Highwayman," "A Commission," and "A Pantomime Rehearsal" being submitted, and Miss Isabel Bateman produced for the first time on any stage "The Slave Girl," dealing with plantation episodes. During the week ending October 14th Carl Rosa Company introduced Leon Cavallo's "Pagliacci" for the first time in Bristol, Mlle. Zelig de Lussan as the heroine, and Messrs. Barton McGucken and Alec Marsh likewise in the cast ; also, for the first time in England, Mascagni's new opera "The Ranzano," with Miss Marie Duma and Messrs. Hedmonot and Rhys Thomas.

Mr. J. L. Toole was here with Barrie's "Walker, London," and D'Oyly Carte Company with "The Vicar of Bray." "The Forty Thieves," by Geoffrey Thorn, with beautiful scenery by Mr. E. W. Coleman and delightful costumes by Mr. Howard Russell, Miss Annie Halford, Ganem, Miss Hetty Chapman, Abdallah, Miss Daisy Baldry, and subsequently Miss Henrietta Turner, Morgiana. The Harlows constituted the beast of burden, and Mr. Harry Collier, for his benefit, produced from amongst the principals, a ladies' harlequinade ! the pantomime being played until March 3rd, 1894. During its run the theatrical and variety professionals then in Bristol gave at the Exhibition (temporary) building on what now constitutes Colston Avenue, a Charity Fete, which proved highly popular.

"The Second Mrs. Tanqueray" was introduced to a Bristol audience by Mr. C. L. Latham's company on April 2nd, and in April "The Other Fellow," by Mr. and Mrs. Richard Edgar's company.

On April 30th, 1894, Mr. Arthur Rousbey, the baritone who had been so remarkably successful in the Gilbert-Sullivan operas, brought his own company constituted for performance of grand opera in English, and at popular prices of admission ! He was accompanied by many fine operatic

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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vocalists, amongst whom were Mesdames Julia Lennox, Agnes Molteno, A. S. Winkworth, St. Austell, Montgomery, F. S. Gilbert and Frank Onslow, the operas produced being "Bohemian Girl," "Cavalleria Rusticana," "Faust," "Fra Diavolo," "Pagliacci," and "Maritana," and the orchestra being under the direction of Mr. E. Goossens, junr. During the following week "The Lady Slavey" was seen for the first time in Bristol, Misses Kitty Loftus and Edith Rosenthal, and Messrs. Keino Johnston, T. W. Volt and W. W. Walton, being amongst the principals.

"Ups and Downs of Life" preceded the musical comedy "Cinderella," with Misses Emille Herve, Ivy Ambrose and Maud Boyd, Messrs. Fred Wright, junr., Walter Groves and Eric Thorne in the cast; but the great sensation consisted in the introduction of the Kilanyi *Tableau Vivants*, from the Palace Theatre. Next came "Utopia, Limited," by Gilbert and Sullivan, and then Mr. Chute's annual benefit, with Miss Marie Montrose as Nan, in "Good for Nothing," and Mr. Ben Greet's company in the comedy of "Money."

Mr. Arthur Roberts, with Miss Florence Schuberth and Messrs. Eric Thorne and Charles E. Stevens assisting, produced Crook and Moncton's lively burlesque, "Claude Duval," for the first time on any stage; the comedy, "The New Boy," next being introduced to Prince's audiences, by Misses Marion Lind, Ida Liston and Gladys Ffolliott, with Messrs. Herbert Standing, and R. Morand, on September 3rd and following night. Then came Miss Marie Montrose in "Little Christopher Columbus."

On September 17th Mr. Henry Irving, supported by Miss Marion Terry, Miss Annie Hughes and Miss Genevieve Ward, appeared as "Becket," and on the 21st and 22nd, as Corporal Gregory Brewster in Mr. A. Conan Doyle's "Story of Waterloo," which was then performed at the Prince's and for the first time on any stage, these two characters representing, to my mind, the pick of the Irving repertoire. The other characters in "Waterloo" were sustained by Miss Annie Hughes, Mr. Fuller Mellish and Mr. Haviland. The engagement was enormously successful.

Mr. Victor Stevens in his own burlesque, "Randolph the Reckless," followed, after which came Mr. Edward Compton and Mr. Wilson Barrett, the latter of whom introduced "The Manxman."

Mr. Comyns Carr sent a powerful company under the direction of Mr. W. H. Vernon, for the representation of Sydney Grundy's "Sowing the Wind." Mr. Vernon filled his original part (as played at the Comedy Theatre) of Mr. Brabazon, Mr. Laurence Cantley his, as Ned Annesley; Mr. Fred Emery was the Mr. Deakin, and Miss Lena Ashwell, Rosamund,

MR. W. H. VERNON.—The son of Mr. Darbell, of Clarence Place, St. Philip, this gifted fellow-citizen was born October 6th, 1834, his first stage appearance at the Theatre Royal being on May 1st, 1862, he representing the character of Evergreen in Morton's famous comedy "Speed the Plough," the occasion being a performance by amateurs, organized as



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## The Bristol Stage

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an expression of sympathy with Mr. J. H. Chute, consequent upon the serious loss he had sustained owing to the destruction by fire of the Theatre Royal, Bath.

Mr. Vernon joined Mr. Chute's stock company in 1866, and during the several seasons that he continued amongst us appeared—and let me say at the outset, with invariable success—in characters so variable in their histrionic requirements, as to possibly establish a record amongst popular comedians. So impressive was his performance as Caliban in the "Tempest," at the opening of the new theatre in Park Row, that upon the fall of the curtain, and previous to his quitting the stage, both Mr. James Bennett (Prospero) and Mr. J. H. Chute hastened to congratulate him.

Leaving Bristol, Mr. Vernon became a member of Miss Herbert's splendid company at St. James's Theatre, London, and later returned to the same house when under the management of Mr. George Alexander. But other London theatres had the benefit of his histrionic skill, and as a creator of parts, notably the comedy, as Mr. Brabazon in "Sowing the Wind," the Globe, where he achieved a triumph in Byron's comedy, "Cyril's Success," and also at the Strand, where he appeared in Grundy's fine play, "Mammon," his Mr. Chinnery I regarded as his greatest stage achievement.

Some years later Mr. Beerbohm Tree reproduced this play under the title of "A Bunch of Violets," but none whom I have met who had witnessed both performances recognized any advantage to the piece, other than, possibly, in its title.

Throughout that wonderful tour undertaken by Miss Genevieve Ward, in which was visited every English-speaking country in the world, Mr. Vernon's Sir Horace Welby, in "Forget me Not," and Henry St. John, in "The Queen's Favourite," were commented upon in eulogistic terms.

Mr. Vernon died in London, December 4th, 1905, and the *Daily Telegraph* in the course of a graceful appreciation, expressed the opinion that he "just missed being great." I cannot accept even this narrow reservation, as it is my well-considered conviction that, as an actor, Mr. Vernon *was* great! All that he missed was that glamour with which the actor-manager is surrounded—or in which he clothes himself!

Neither am I alone in my estimate of this popular Bristolian's ability, for Miss Genevieve Ward, with sixty years' experience of the actors of all nations, wrote me at the close of 1917: "I quite agree in your estimate of our old friend, W. H. Vernon, and his versatility exceeded that of any other actor I ever saw."

Mr. George Alexander, with the St. James's Company, comprising Misses Irene Vanbrugh, Evelyn Millard, and Granville, together with Messrs. Herbert Waring, H. V. Esmond, A. Vane-Tempest, Arthur Royston and A. Bromley-Davenport, appeared in "The Masqueraders" and "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray," this engagement being succeeded

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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by the Drury Lane drama "The Prodigal Daughter," which contained the sensation of the race for the Grand National.

Mr. Augustus Harris's Covent Garden Italian Opera Company was here for six nights, being succeeded by Mr. F. R. Benson's fine production of "Julius Cæsar," Mr. Benson impersonating Mark Antony; Mr. Louis Calvert, Brutus; and Mr. Frank Rodney, Cassius; whilst Mr. Oscar Asche was seen as Meterlus.

Mr. J. L. Toole, accompanied by those veteran partners in his joys and sorrows, Messrs. John Billington, George Shelton and Miss Eliza Johnstone, produced for the first time in Bristol Ralph Lumley's play, "The Best Man," with which he had made a success in London; and on Saturday, December 22nd, Mr. Chute produced his 1894-5 pantomime, "Bo-Peep." This was from the pen of Mr. Fred Locke, a well-tried author of provincial pantomimes, indeed he laid claim to upwards of 250 such, the Bristol locals and the lyrics being supplied by our fellow-citizen, Mr. Percy Clarke. Messrs. W. E. Coleman, G. H. Holmes, J. Cox and assistants were responsible for the scenery, Mr. Howell Russell for the costume designs, and, of course, Mr. G. R. Chapman for the music.

The cast was altogether excellent, Miss Isa Bowman being an ideal Bo-Peep, and Miss Grace Huntley the bonniest of Boy Blues. The sisters Belfry were Tommy Tucker and Margery Daw, whilst Miss Ray Maskell, a wonderful dancer, played Mary, Mary, quite contrary; Miss Louisa Peach sang finely as the Fairy Queen, Miss Lily Shaw, ditto, as the Evil Genius, and there were a heap of other well-filled lady characters. Mother Hubbard was Mr. Harry Fischer; Johnny Horner, Mr. Billy Seward; Old Dog Tray, Master Freddie Farren; Bon-Ton were the acrobats, and the Little Levite troupe, the chief fun producers and representatives in the harlequinade. Until March 2nd, 1895, the Christmas fare never lost its savour!

On March 11th "A Gaiety Girl" was performed for the first time in Bristol, and that by an excellent company, amongst whom were Misses Edith Kenward, Francis Earle, Violet Neville and Kate Brazier, Messrs. Templar-Saxe, Sam Wilkipson, Pemberton Peach, W. Grove-Watson and W. E. Gregory.

Mr. W. G. Wills' admirable play, "A Royal Divorce," was represented by Miss Edith Cole as Josephine and Mr. J. N. Clynds, Napoleon. Mr. Willie Edouin and powerful company were seen in "Quong Hi, the Heathen Chineese," after which Mr. J. F. Elliston presented "In Old Kentucky," with its four race-horses and exciting race.

"A Life of Pleasure," the latest Drury Lane drama, followed, and for Whitsuntide, Mr. Louis Calvert came with Burnand's famous drama, "Proof." "Go-Bang," its successor, was a rattling farcical comedy, in which Mr. Harry Grattan and Mr. Fred Storey were seen in their original parts.

Mr. Laurence Irving, on June 17th, produced the drama, adapted by

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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him in collaboration with Mr. Seymour Hicks, "Silas Ruthyn," and on June 24th the Savoy opera "The Chieftain," with Miss Florence St. John, constituted the attraction.

On the Wednesday, during the last-named engagement, Madame Sarah Bernhardt gave a performance of Marguerite Gautier in "*La Dame aux Camelias*." Prices of admission were: dress circle and stalls, 15s.; balcony, 10s. 6d.; upper circle, 5s.; pit stalls, 6s. (early doors, 7s.); pit, 3s. (early doors, 4s.); gallery, 3s. Private boxes, five, four, and three guineas.

On the following Monday (July 1st, 1895), Mr. Chute made his annual appeal; the programme, however, was of quite an unusual type for such occasions.

"The Gay Parisienne," by George Dance, was performed on August 19th, and the farcical comedy, "Tom, Dick and Harry," succeeded it.

Miss Isabel Bateman introduced next to Bristol Pinero's "Profligate." Subsequently Miss May Yöhe appeared in "The Circus Girl," after which Mr. Mackintosh was seen as Mr. Richard Cato in "The Case of Rebellious Susan," a delightful comedy by Henry Arthur Jones, Misses Purcell, Nina Boucicault and Helen Ferrers being also in the case.

In "His Excellency," W. S. Gilbert's opera from the Lyric, there were Misses Madeleine Galton, Alice Aynsley Cook, and Marjorie Garthorne, Mr. Charles Weir and Mr. Robert Courtneidge, Mr. Ernest Vousden conducting the orchestra. The following week was devoted by Mr. Wilson Barrett to performances of "The Sign of the Cross," which was then being seen here for the first time.

So also was the farcical comedy the "Passport," by B. C. Stephenson and W. Yardley, and performed by Miss Cicely Richards and Mr. Charles W. Garthorne.

The Adelphi drama, the "Fatal Card," the work of Haddon Chambers and B. C. Stephenson, was represented by an excellent company, amongst whom were Mr. G. W. Anson, Mr. E. Story-Gofton, and Miss Emily Miller.

"Princess Ida," Gilbert and Sullivan's popular opera, which during the past ten years had been on the shelf, was revived by the D'Oyly Carte Company, with considerable success, and the following week was devoted to Mrs. Bernard Beere in "Fedora," "As in a Looking-glass," and "Adrienne Lecouvreur," whilst the last item on the engagement list prior to the pantomime was that of Mr. Edward Terry, who appeared in a round of characters (two each evening), prominent amongst which was H. J. Byron's comedy, "Weak Woman," in which he played his original part, Captain Ginger. On Thursday, December 12th, Mr. Terry produced, and for the first time on any stage, a comedy intitled "Q. Q.," by H. T. Johnson.

"Cinderella," by Fred Locke, and with lyrics by Percy Clarke, was the pantomime of 1895-6, and being the first in which it had been possible



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## The Bristol Stage

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to associate electric light effects with the *corps de ballet*, etc., it became known as the "Electric pantomime." The method adopted, although the best that electrical science had then made possible, was of so primitive a nature that at a later period it would have provoked yells of derisive merriment from all parts. Each fairy was weighted to earth by an electric cable attached to her waist, and as, holding above her head a half-hoop of silvery foliage, she dragged after her this extraordinary tail possessing almost the diameter of a half-penny. Dance, there was none; with the formidable appendage it was a case of *non possumus*! but at the psychological moment the current was transmitted, and the floral bowers illuminated with a multitude of little lamps for blossoms. As I have suggested, the method at the present time would be regarded as an absurdity, but even in 1896, the effect upon the audience was "electric!"

The company engaged proved to be far in advance of any yet seen upon the Bristol stage. Misses Bessie Wentworth, Karit Barry, Frances Earle, Eva Gandee, Laura Thompson, Maude Leighton (Mrs. T. W. Thompson) and Evie Green, Messrs. G. P. Huntley, William H. Powell, Jerrold Manville, W. T. Thompson, and Frank Dix, together with the Almonti troupe, constituted a great cast. A great hit was secured by the charming rendering of "Say Au Revoir," by Miss Evie Green, the Fairy Queen, and which never failed to gain a warm encore. This success was probably the foundation of the prosperous career upon which the fair *artiste* entered, her impersonation of Dolores in "Floradora" being universally acclaimed, but on September 11th, 1917, she expired at the residence of her father, in Southsea, her native town.

Other highly appreciated musical numbers in Cinderella were "Polly on her Gee-gee," "This is a Chorus Song," "Houses in Between," "Louisiana Loo," "Honey come listen to me," "Looking for a Coon like me," "Twinkle Star" (the topical duet by Bessie Wentworth and T. W. Thompson); the Trilby burlesque by Mr. T. W. and Miss Laura Thompson, and the Transformation Scene were also attractive items. Previous engagements notwithstanding, Mr. Chute somehow arranged to keep "Cinderella," which never flagged, on the boards until March 14th, 1896.

It was during this successful run that the "Flying Matinee" was instituted here, the first being that of Mr. Arthur Bouchier, who, with both Miss Violet and Miss Irene Vanbrugh, appeared in "The Chili Widow" on January 15th, and the next that of Mr. Comyns Carr's company, Miss Winifred Emery, Esme Beringer, and Rose Leclercq, with Messrs. Leonard Boyne, Cyril Maude and J. G. Grahame, in Sydney Grundy's "The Late Mr. Castello," two fine matinee performances beyond question.

"An Artist's Model" was produced on March 23rd, and with a very strong "George Edwardes" company, which included Misses Maud Boyd, Ethel Hope, and Millicent Pyne, with Messrs. Walter Groves, Leonard

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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Russell and Walter Clifford, attracted large audiences, to whom the "Trilby" song recently introduced appealed strongly.

On Monday, March 30th, the Bristol Histrionic, from the ranks of which quite a number of veteran amateur "sock and buskinites" had disappeared, gave a performance in aid of the War Veterans Fund, and attracted a full audience. The play, "Trilby," was staged on April 20th, Miss Ruggles as Trilby, Mr. Laurence Irving, Svengali, Mr. Edmund Gurney, Taffy, and Mr. Arthur Helmore as the Rev. Thos. Bagot.

The Arthur Rousbey Company, during a return visit, produced for the first time in Bristol the opera of "Mercedes," whilst Mr. Milton Bode, whose company followed, introduced under similar circumstances the Basil Hood-Walter Slaughter musical comedy "Gentleman Joe," Mr. Frank Danby as the hansom cabby, and Miss Emmeline Orford as Emma, the superior slavey.

Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, appearing here for the first time since their return from America, relied upon "The Queen's Shilling," "Lord and Lady Guilderoy," "A White Lie," "The Ironmaster," and "A Scrap of Paper." Prices of admission were advanced, and I am disposed to think unfortunately it was so; at any rate, Mrs. Kendal had something to say as to an apparent absence of enthusiasm in the city of her early triumphs.

After the "Shop Girl" came "East Lynne," Mr. Fosbrooke receiving a warm welcome on being recognized as Justice Hare, a character which he had represented upwards of 2,000 times.

MR. WILLIAM FOSBROOKE, or to give him his correct name, William Wooldridge, that of Fosbrooke being adopted for stage purposes, was born in London, in the year 1830, and at the early age of fifteen years was already on the stage.

Bradford, under Mr. Leclercq, was his initial dive, his elder brother being in the company, and from there Bristol's old favourite went to Hull, Mr. Rignold, senr., being the manager of the theatre, and from that rival seaport he came to Bristol towards the close of Mrs. Macready's management. My earliest recollection of him is of the middle fifties as Mr. Marks, in "Uncle Tom's Cabin," and equally vivid is the picture of his pantaloon, a character he invariably filled up to the accident I have elsewhere described. In the pantomime opening he was, moreover, generally to be found, and quoting only from that of "Beauty and the Beast," with Miss Carlotta Addison, at the Theatre Royal, to the production of the same subject in 1877-8 at the Prince's, shows a fairly large experience in Bristol pantomimes.

But Mr. Fosbrooke was otherwise an actor who in his time played many parts, and although I feel constrained to admit that in some of these, such as Jim Dalton, the Dougal, etc., I never pretended to be an admirer

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## The Bristol Stage

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of his, in characters wherein he reflected his own kindly nature and domesticity—for unlike the profession generally, Mr. Fosbrooke was at no time a devotee to Bohemianism—I always regarded him as *facile princeps*, and those who witnessed his performances as Dan Puffy, Moses Israel, Jimmy Sparrow, and so on, or in “Domestic Economy,” will easily follow me in my suggestion.

With the exception of a brief season in London, taken at the earnest invitation of Miss Henrietta Hodson, when she became proprietor of the Royalty Theatre, Mr. Fosbrooke was a member of the Bristol Company from 1852 until it was disbanded, and even up to 1886 was in all, or nearly all, of the dramatic productions of the Brothers Chute. He had toured with Mr. Barry Sullivan and also with Miss Bateman, and had long held his position in Mr. Pitt Hardacre’s “East Lynne” Company. It was whilst thus engaged at Manchester he was taken ill, and following upon an operation, he expired on October 26th, 1898, Mr. Charles Kean Chute, who was likewise in the company, being with his father’s old friend and servant at the last.

Interred in the picturesque God’s acre attached to the parish church at Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol, his resting-place is marked by a handsome white marble scroll, suitably inscribed and which was “erected to his memory by a few of his ardent admirers,” this memorial being unveiled on May 27th, 1905, by Mr. James Macready Chute.

Although Mr. Fosbrooke became pretty bald early in life, it was a circumstance known to few, and a secret that he would have withheld from playgoers generally, practically at the cost of his life. With his brown curly wig and a clean shaven face “Funny Fozz” looked almost boyish even when really advanced in life. I remember an occasion during the old days when a certain amount of stage spoof, such as forestalling each other’s lines, used to mark the last performance of the pantomime, there was a general assault and removal of wigs, not a few of the wearers proving to be as bald as our old comedian. Each wig experienced capture, save one!—Mr. Fosbrooke clasping his both hands above his head, had defeated all comers.

The Bank Holiday of 1896 occurred so early in the month of August as the 2nd inst., the drama, “The Girl I Left Behind Me,” being staged; the musical comedy, “The French Maid,” immediately following. Mr. Charles Warner was seen in his most famous impersonation, Coupeau, in “Drink,” and one might readily omit the comma after the Coupeau so far as the play itself was concerned; still it was the topic of the day and drew large audiences, but the farcical comedy a “Trip to Chinatown” seemed a pleasant change. “Rosemary,” by Louis N. Parker and Murray Carson, with the latter as Sir James Thorndyke, was a quietly attractive production, and during the week the company presented for the first time on any stage a play by Malcolm Watson, the “Haven of Content.”

“The Medical Charities” ever appealed to the Bristol theatre man-



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## *The Bristol Stage*

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agement, for A.D. 1756 a performance at Jacob's Well produced for the Infirmary funds £50 2s. 10d., and in 1766 the profits arising from the first performance at the Theatre in King Street were devoted to the same cause. A grand festival, in connection with St. Paul's Church, realized £202 13s. 6d. at Easter, 1803. There were, however, numerous other contributions, and on Monday, November 2nd, 1896, the amateurs of the city commenced a week of performances for the benefit of the local medical charities, and an exceedingly full list of patrons gave evidence of the citizens' appreciation of this no small undertaking. "The Sorcerer" and "The Mikado" were the musical items, whilst Sheridan's comedy, "The Rivals," did dramatic duty. Amongst the exponents were Drs. F. Richardson, Lionel A. Weatherly, Ogilvy, Preston King, and Walsh. On April 18th following, the amateurs again appeared, as presently recorded.

"All Aboard," with Miss Isa Bowman, Mr. Charles E. Stevens and Mr. George Carroll in their original London parts, was introduced to Bristol, and during the following week the comic opera entitled the "Black Squire" was similarly given a first show here by the Hogarth "Les Cloches" Company.

November 23rd witnessed the production at the Prince's of the strikingly romantic play, "The Prisoner of Zenda," Mr. Yorke Stephens as Rudolph, Mr. Charles K. Chute as Wolfgang, and Mr. Frederick Powell as Colonel Sapt; and the following week that of "On the March," Thos. S. Murray, Horace Mills, and Stratton Mills making merriment for all and sundry. The Carl Rosa Company, which now included Mlle. Zélie de Lussan, Miss Kirkby Lunn, Miss Bessie Macdonald, Miss Alice Esty and Miss Rita Elandi, with Messrs. Brozel, E. C. Hedmond, Alec Marsh and Robert Cunningham, played a very successful week. Another benefit for the Crimean Veterans was given by the amateurs, and then followed the pantomime.

"Robinson Crusoe" created for the season 1896-7 something of a pantomimic epoch, notwithstanding the Christmas annual had already settled down into what was, practically, an event of assured success. Wilton Jones was the author, Percy Clarke wrote the lyrics. Howell Russell, designer of costumes; Mr. W. R. Coleman, with Mr. W. J. Cox, were scenic artists; Mr. Henry Turner, stage-manager; and Mrs. Henry Turner, ballet-mistress. This pantomime first introduced the Tillér Troubadour Troupe of dancers, also the Haytors. The company comprised Misses Bessie Wentworth, Elaine Ravensberg and Stella St. Audrie, as amongst the ladies; Messrs. Walter Sealby, Stratton Mills, Frank Dix and Henry Wright being amongst the "gents."

Mr. H. Beerbohm Tree, with whom was Miss Kate Rörke, Miss Jessie Warner, Miss Frances Ivor, and our whilom fellow-citizen, Mr. Arthur Holmes-Gore; also Messrs. Lionel Brough, Gerald du Maurier (who played Rosencrantz), F. P. Stevens, Edgar and Lincoln, at advanced

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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prices of admission, experienced a finely successful week, producing "Trilby," "Bunch of Violets," "Hamlet," etc.

On the concluding day of the engagement (March 13th, 1897) Mr. H. Beerbohm Tree was entertained at luncheon, the fine dining-room of the Liberal Club being fully occupied by a thoroughly representative assembly of citizens.

"The Star of India," by Sims and Pettitt, preceded the Kendal's week. They played "A Scrap of Paper," and introduced to us both Allen Upward's play, "A Cruel Heritage," and Sydney Grundy's "The Greatest of These."

A capital comedy company, amongst which were Misses Carlotta Zerbini, Queenie Leighton, Marie Illington and Gertrude Fisher; Mr. Alfred Maltby and Mr. Arthur Willerby, appeared in the farcical comedy, "A Night Out"; and on May 17th, 1897, that delightful Japanese opera, "The Geisha," was heard in Bristol for the first time. Miss Minnie Hunt proved charming in the title rôle, whilst the work was otherwise admirably cast, Misses Margaret Warren, Carrie Kavanagh, Lena McNaughton, and Maud Bowden being amongst *les demoiselles*, and Mr. Reddick Anderson (as Reginald Fairfax), Bertie Wright, John M. Hay and John Humphries amongst the male impersonators of the characters.

"The American Belle" followed, and then came Max O'Rell in his farcical comedy, "On the Continent"; and on June 21st, 1897, Mr. Walter Sealby (so recently Mrs. Crusoe) made quite a success as Mrs. Murphy in "A Trip to Chicago." This being the period of the Diamond Jubilee celebration, there was also an impressive performance of the National Anthem, the solos being rendered by Miss Julia Kennard, Miss Kate Whittard and Mr. J. Mundy, the full orchestra being enriched by a military band; whilst on the concluding night of the engagement, Mr. Chute taking his benefit, the solos of "God Save the Queen" were sung by Miss Clara Butt, who also, during the course of the evening, delighted the audience with "The Lost Chord." Mr. Sealby had to voice his pantomime hit, "At My Time of Life," Mr. Arthur Hayman singing the Jubilee song, "God bless Victoria."

During the autumn Little Tich appeared for six nights in "Lord Tom Noddy," and on September 27th Miss Constance Moxon and Mr. Tom Craven were seen in the latter's musical play, "The Ballad Singer."

The Carl Rosa Company, now showing a considerable change of *personnel*, consisted, amongst the principals, of Misses Rita Elandi, Thea Dorre, Cecile Lorraine, Lily Heenan, Bessie Macdonald and Kirkby Lunn, with Messrs. Brokel, Umberto Salir, Charles Tilbury, Guiseppe Maggi, and William Dever, produced, for the first time in Bristol, Puccini's romantic opera, "La Boheme," the other works heard during the week being "Il Trovatore," "Faust," "Tannhauser," and "Mignon."

An excellent combination was that brought by Mr. William Greet

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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with George Dance's musical comedy, "The New Mephisto," there being of its number Misses Nellie Murray, Jenny Richards, the Sisters Cossell, Misses Ruby Hallier, Laura Clairight, Peggy Campbell and Ethel Salisbury; as also Messrs. Mark Sheridan, Albert le Fre, Alfred Donohoe, George Sinclair and W. Ellis. The musical director was Mr. Ernest Vousden, who, rightly or wrongly, I assumed to be a son of the veteran composer and entertainer of my youth, Mr. Valentine Vousden.

"My Girl," from the Gaiety, with Miss Hetty Chapman in her original character, the Mayoress of Porthampton, and Mr. W. H. Downs in his, of John Fahee, drew good houses; and then we had an excellent week with an exceptionally strong company in "Toto and Tata," a musical comedy under the direction of our own manager, Mr. Chute, and produced by Willie Edouin. The twin brother and sister (Toto and Tata) were played by Miss Marie Montrose, and it was in this production that with the Military Cadets around her we heard her sing "The Dandy Fifth." Mr. E. J. Lonnen headed the list of comedians, amongst whom were, however, Mr. Walter Groves, Mr. Roland Cunningham, etc.

"Red Riding Hood" put in an appearance on December 23rd, 1897. Mr. William Wade was the author, but otherwise there was no change from 1896 in the departmental responsibility for the 1897 annual. Red Riding Hood was Miss Laura Thompson; Boy Blue, Miss Emmeline Orford; Miss Muffit, Miss Ada Willoughby; and other characters were ably represented. Mr. G. P. Huntley was irresistible as the Dame, "Tut-tut"; Mr. Frank Danby was the Baron; Mr. W. T. Thompson, Johnny Stout; Ernest Shand, Jimmy Green; and the Brothers Inda as a couple of footmen were very diverting. In this pantomime, which was brought to a close with a brief harlequinade, one obtained an early impression of the "movies," by reason of Bosco Irving's animated photographs. March 12th, 1898, saw its final performance.

It was succeeded by "Two Little Vagabonds," after which was presented "Under the Red Robe," Miss Muriel Wylford and Mr. Henry Renoufs being seen in the principal characters.

On Monday, April 18th, there was a second week venture by the Amateurs, on behalf of the Bristol medical charities, the programme consisting of "Gondoliers," "Arrah na Pogue," and "Mountebanks." The following week was occupied by "The Ballet Girl," in which Mr. John Humphries appeared as Eugene Taradelle; and subsequently, Miss Emma Hutchinson introduced Henry Arthur Jones' comedy, "The Liars."

"*La Poupee*" was an immediate success! Miss Stella Gastelle as Alesia and Mr. Eric Thorne as Hilarius.

On June 13th Mr. J. L. Shine produced, prior to its production in London, the three-act farce, "Tommy Dodd"; and as the author of the famous song of that name, Mr. Ernee Clark, was a well-known licensed victualler of our city, it had some special recommendation for patronage.



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## *The Bristol Stage*

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Miss Eva Moore, Miss Cicely Richards, Miss Katie Lee and Miss Crace Noble graced the ladies' characters; and Messrs. J. L. Shine, J. L. Mackay, Bertie Wright and Frank Macdonnell gave them all support.

Mr. Cecil Beryl's company, with "Bilberry of Tilbury," was a most efficient one, there being Misses Margaret Warren, Amy Augarde, Jenny Owen and Carlotta Zerbin, with Messrs. Ernest Shand, W. J. Manning, Stratton Mills and Templar Saxe; whilst on the Saturday was a flying matinee production of "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray," with Mrs. Patrick Campbell and Mr. Forbes Robertson.

Mr. Chute took his benefit on Monday, June 27th, 1898, relying upon "The Area Belle," in which pantomime favourites appeared, with Miss Marie Hylton as Penelope; and "Dr. Bill," with Mr. J. G. Grahame and Mr. Milton Bode in the cast. Miss Minnie Hunt also appeared, receiving an enthusiastic encore in "The Jewel of Asia."

## CHAPTER XX

A.D. 1898

"THE J.P.," with Mr. Lionel Rignold, "The Transit of Venus," with Miss Marie Montrose and Mr. J. F. McArdle, the "Belle of New York," and then came the "Dove Cot," with Mr. James Welch, each being presented in Bristol for the first time, the last-named engagement ushering in that of Henry Irving and Ellen Terry.

"The Little Minister" was followed by Mr. Wilson Barrett, after which Sidney Jones's excellent musical play, a "Greek Slave," was the attraction, the Misses Coralie Blythe, Minnie Hunt, Alice Barnett and Maud Boyd, together with Messrs. Harrison Brockbank, Horace Mills, Rhys Thomas and W. H. Rawlins giving assurance of an adequate representation.

The farcical comedy, "Oh ! Susannah," which was an attraction at the Royalty Theatre in London, was next produced in Bristol for the first time, as was also that remarkable play, the "Cat and the Cherub," which preceded it, this being, I fancy, the first of the Chinese plays to be performed in this country. It was pretty creepy, as appears to be the vogue of Chinese drama, but admirably acted by Miss Mary Brougham, Mr. Laurence Cantley, Mr. H. Gomer May, and others. "The Runaway Girl," "One of the Best," "White Heather," and the St. James's play, by R. C. Carton, the "Tree of Knowledge," brought us to the 1898-9 pantomime, "Sinbad the Sailor," of which William Wade was the author, the lyrics being by our fellow-citizen, Mr. Frank Dix, whilst Mr. W. R. Coleman was the scenic artist.

Its exponents were Miss Lelia Roze (who had previously been seen at the Theatre Royal), Miss Minnie Leverentz, and Miss Isabel Dillon, together with Messrs. Walter Sealby, who scored in "At My Time of Life," J. F. McArdle, H. C. Barry and Walter Bellonini, the last-named as steward of the tempest-tossed and realistically rocking ship, giving a marvellous exhibition of plate throwing, and also introduced his clever dog-circus as a wind-up to the pantomime ; March 4th witnessed the last performance.

The latest Savoy production, "The Lucky Star," by Ivan Caryll, followed, but once again we found Savoy, Gilbert and Sullivan an essential triumvirate for the production of "Savoy" enthusiasm.

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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"The Three Musketeers," with Mr. Charles Warner and Miss Sidney Crowe, gave quite an old time enjoyment of this clever play.

In June "The Only Way" was produced for the first time here, as indeed, it was in the provinces, Mr. William Haviland giving a delightful reading of Dickens' famous hero, whilst Lucy Manette was as charmingly enacted by his wife, Miss Amy Coleridge; the powerful character, The Vengeance, being also most impressively represented by Miss Augusta Haviland. Mr. Martin Harvey was still playing Sidney Carton in London.

MR. WILLIAM HAVILAND was a Bristolian, Miss Augusta Haviland being his sister, son and daughter of Mr. Fred Irwin, a well-known landlord and lover of the drama, he having been for some years a member of the Bristol Histrionic Society. The resemblance of his name to that of Irving suggested to Mr. William Irwin the desirability of seeking some other for stage purposes, and the North Somerset Yeomanry, of which both his father and himself were troopers, being commanded by Captain Haviland, and "Haviland" coming trippingly from the tongue, he adopted it, as did his sister.

Both Mr. and Miss Haviland have appeared at the Prince's subsequent to the performance just mentioned, he being in the cast on Mr. Forbes Robertson's production there of that fine play "For the Crown"; whilst in addition to these important engagements he had, in turn, been chief lieutenant to Mr. Martin Harvey, Mr. Beerbohm Tree, and other well-known actors, whilst he had also taken part in no less than four "command" performances at either Sandringham or Windsor, King Edward being in residence.

More than one breakdown in health had acted adversely in regard to his professional engagements, and had arrested a practically assured career of prosperity, until conviction came that it was useless to continue in hope of reasonable recovery. Mr. Haviland then relinquished the stage and proceeded to join his (second) wife, Miss Edith Latimer, in New York; and in that city, at the age of fifty-seven years, he died, September 20th, 1917

July 3rd brought the spring season of 1899 to a close with Mr. Chute's benefit, Mr. Harry Paulton appearing in "Niobe," whilst Miss Katie Barry, George P. Huntley and J. F. McArdle completed an acceptable programme.

"The Adventure of Dame Ursula," with Misses Ida Molesworth and Alice Ingram, Messrs. J. G. Grahame and J. R. Crauford, was seen here in September.

In November "The Manœuvres of Jane" was performed, it being during the week of this engagement that Queen Victoria visited the city for the purpose of opening the Jubilee Convalescent Home on Durdham



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## *The Bristol Stage*

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Down, whilst two days prior to that event the death of Mr. S. M. Chute occurred.

MR. STEPHEN MACREADY CHUTE.—“Steve,” as he was invariably known to his large circle of friends, was the fourth son of Mr. J. H. Chute, being born at Bath on August 27th, 1852. For many years he had been the chief of the publicity department of the Prince’s Theatre, and was widely known, not only in the city itself, but throughout many miles of the surrounding country.

In somewhat earlier life Mr. Stephen Chute had also been a familiar figure, as a member of the Ariel Rowing Club, the Volunteer Naval Reserve, as well as on the cricket field, where his appearance was always greatly appreciated, for he played an useful innings, and was in this, as in all things, a sportsman!

Latterly his health had not been good, and at the age of forty-seven years, at Knowle, where he had long resided, he passed away on November 14th, 1899.

Mrs. S. M. Chute was formerly Miss Goodier, a member of the company in Theatre Royal days, retiring, however, when she married; whilst their son, Mr. George Chute, is another well-known member of the family, having been for some time past the assistant manager at the Prince’s Theatre.

Mr. W. S. Penley having appeared in a “Little Ray of Sunshine,” and Messrs. Charles Glenney and Horace Lingard in “Why Smith Left Home,” the Drury Lane drama, “The Great Ruby,” was staged.

During the rehearsals of the pantomime, the Bristol Choral Society gave a performance in aid of the South African War Fund, promoted by Bristol’s first Lord Mayor, Sir Herbert Ashman.

“Aladdin” was produced on Saturday, December 23rd, Miss Ada Reeve appearing in the name part; Miss Worth as the princess; Mr. Frank Danby, the Widow Twankey; Mr. John Humphries, Abanazar; and Mr. Bertie Wright, Washee-Washee! “Aladdin” held the boards until March 12th, 1900, Mr. Wilson Barrett and Miss Maud Jefferies appearing on the following Monday.

Neither authors nor dramatic stars had been greatly in evidence until the opening of the past decade, and indeed until even a later date—moreover, there continued a vast preponderance of musical plays of some calibre or other, a position that continues at the present time. But “it was ever thus!” or rather so it had been from the epoch of the extravaganza, upwards of fifty years ago.

Dramatists were, however, becoming far more numerous, dramatic output more extensive, the majority of these efforts being destined, however, only to fret their little hour upon the stage, and then to be seen no more! Not always by any means was it that they lacked interest either, for I have in mind quite a number of truly excellent plays—or so I regarded

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## The Bristol Stage

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them, deserving of a far happier fate. Apparently, however, they were "caviare to the general," and so found their places, quite undeservedly on the shelf, or in the waste-paper basket.

Writing towards the close of the eighteenth century, the author of "Memoirs of the Bristol Stage" is mightily severe upon the public taste, which subsequent to the first four years of the Theatre Royal (1766-1769) had led to the deflection of the stage from its legitimate purpose. Reviewing the more distant past and those four years, he says: "It will be seen that the managers of the theatre relied entirely on the *legitimate* drama for support. The sterling works of our old English bards were found sufficient to draw overflowing houses. Very few new pieces are amongst the list—no modern Tom Thumb *tragedy*, no farce called, by a misnomer, *comedy*! nor had the monster *melodrama* (that ridiculous substitute of *sound* for *sense*, wherein the author, when at a fault for appropriate language in which to convey his meaning, has recourse to a flourish of music) appeared on our boards—no Bartholomew Fair exhibitions then disgraced the stage; but *TEMPORA mutantur et Nos mutamur in illis*! Let it not, however, be supposed that I mean to cast any reflection on our present managers of theatres for these strange innovations: by no means; they are not to be blamed, since—

"The drama's laws, the drama's patrons give,"

and one cannot sufficiently admire the *taste* of this *enlightened* age in which that wretched, vulgar piece, called "Tom and Jerry," has drawn much better houses than the immortal productions of Shakespeare or Otway!"

And then he asks this question:—

"Had Powell and Holland lived to this present time, how would those great actors have blushed to see themselves mixed up with *rope-dancers*, *pugilists*, *horses*, and *dogs*!"

May we not add, "How would they fancy themselves in *Revue*?"

Mr. Charles Frohman presented "The Christian," with Miss Lily Hall Caine and Mr. Henry Renouf in the leading parts; and Mr. Charles Cartwright, accompanied by Miss Sydney Fairbrother, appeared in "The Middleman." "The Rose of Persia," by Basil Hood and Arthur Sullivan, performed by the D'Oyly Carte Company, made way for a fine production of "Midsummer Night's Dream," with Mr. F. H. Macklin as Bottom, the Weaver.

On May 21st Mr. Arthur Holmes-Gore appeared in the "Case of Rebellious Susan," another of the Baring Bros.' matinees being given on the 24th, and that with great success.

The season closed on June 25th, when Mr. Chute took his benefit; Mr. Charles Sugden and Mr. Charles Kean Chute appeared in "Jim the Penman."

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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"Kitty Grey," a musical comedy which subsequently enjoyed a prosperous career in London and elsewhere, was a Prince's production, the weight of the humour being laid on the shoulders of Mr. G. P. Huntley. Beyond this, however, the cast proved of an exceptional character, even for a George Edwardes' company, there being Misses Evie Greene, Lilian Belmore, Mabel Love and Ethel Sydney, with Messrs. Harry Monkhouse, Fritz Rimma, and Maurice Farkoa. Next came the production of "Florodora," Miss Amy Augarde as Dolores.

A "Message from Mars" ensued, and then three nights of the "Prisoner of Zenda," and for the first time in Bristol "Rupert of Hentzau."

MR. CHARLES KEAN CHUTE.—It was in "The Prisoner of Zenda" that Mr. C. K. Chute had last appeared upon the Bristol stage, whereon both he and his wife, Miss Sybil Claridge, had on several occasions been so warmly welcomed. The youngest son of Mr. J. H. Chute, "Charlie," a name of appreciation by which everybody called him, had early taken his place in the ranks of those who "fret their hour upon the stage," and throughout his career had made steady and consistent advance in his profession. An early impersonation of his was Geoffrey Ware, in "The Silver King," which he jokingly claimed to be the principal part, as all the characters were constantly referring to him, and as Geoffrey Ware was the foundation of the play. Later he was cast for the Spider, and was regarded by many as the best exponent of that subtle part since Mr. Willard, who created it.

Of a bright, manly temperament, Mr. Chute was a favourite with all who knew him. He died in London, on January 26th, 1905.

On Thursday, November 1st, Messrs. Baring Bros. repeated their musical matinee venture, bringing Misses Ada Reeve and Connie Ediss, Messrs. Huntley Wright, Frank Lawton, Mervyn Dene and Frank Boor.

"Lady Huntworth's Experiment" was succeeded by Mr. Forbes Robertson, who made his first "star" appearance here on Monday, November 12th, in "Hamlet," and on the 13th in "The Devil's Disciple," a play by George Bernard Shaw. "The Messenger Boy," with Miss Sybil Arundale and Mr. Bertie Wright in prominence; the "Gay Lord Quex," as diagnosed by Mr. Maurice Manchin; and next "San Toy," with Miss Maggie May. "Lord and Lady Algy" preceded the production of "Dick Whittington," which event took place on Saturday, December 22nd, 1900. The character of Dick was undertaken by Miss Millie Hylton; "Pussy" by Arthur Lupino; Idle Jack, Mr. Ernest Shand; Alice, Miss Lydia Flopp; Tommy Turner, Miss Bessie Featherstone; whilst the Tiller Troupe was once again included in the cast.

Success was undiminished until March 2nd, 1901.

The features of the Irving-Terry week were "Robespierre," "Nance Oldfield," and "Waterloo."

"Lady Windermere's Fan" was next staged, with Miss Marion Terry



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## *The Bristol Stage*

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Miss Gertrude Burnett and Mr. T. B. Thalberg; "Mrs. Dane's Defence" following, with Evelyn Weaden and Mr. Henry Neville in the cast.

The Moody-Manners Opera Company, a fine combination, including Signor Gheraldi, John Child, Charles Manners, Dillon Shallard, Charles Magrath, E. C. Hedmouth, and Willie Dever, with Madame Alice Esty, Zelig de Lussan, Nedda Morrison, Maud Baker, Lucile Hill, Lily and Fanny Moody, performed "Faust," "Lohengrin," "Tannhauser," "Flying Dutchman," and "Bohemian Girl."

"My friend the Prince" preceded the "Lady of Ostend"; whilst "Dream Faces," a comedieta, with Miss Carlotta Addison in her original character, and the comedy, "Our Flat," with Mr. J. R. F. Graham, constituted Mr. Chute's benefit programme.

Mrs. Patrick Campbell appeared in "Lady Tetley's Divorce," she being supported by Mr. Gerald du Maurier; and on September 23rd the "Silver Slipper" was brought to the Prince's from the Lyric Theatre; "The Wilderness," from the St. James's Theatre, following.

Sullivan's Opera, the "Emerald Isle," was presented with Misses Alice Aynsley Cook, Jessie Rose, and Ethel Stuart Barker, Messrs. Dillon Shallard, Sidney Bracey and Mr. R. Morant in the principal parts, and after a week with Carl Rosa's Company, Mr. E. C. Hedmond being seen in "Siegfried," and Miss Lucilla Hill in Gounod's "Cinq Mars," Mr. Forbes Robertson, accompanied by Mr. William Haviland, produced for the first time in Bristol "For the Crown," and Ian Robertson's "A Play in Little," as items of the week's programme.

The former of these two plays, a beautifully poetic work, afforded Mr. Haviland what was probably his most convincing opportunity of dramatic representation.

Cecil Raleigh's drama, "The Price of Peace," from Old Drury, was presented well, Mr. Henry George as the Earl of Derwent; after which came the comedy, "Second in Command," from the Haymarket, and then "Withered Leaves." During the week of the last named, another of the successful musical matinees organized by Messrs. Baring Bros. was given.

"The Babes in the Wood" was the subject selected for the pantomime, amongst the principal performers therein being Misses Millie Legarde, Annie Purcell, Nelly and Daisy Stratton, Lilian Piercy and Nellie Christie, the last named, as Topsy, becoming a great favourite with the audience. There were also Messrs. Horace Mills, Wilkie Bard, and Foster Courtenay. Two scenes of especial charm for the purpose of such a subject were "Doll Land," by George Jackson, and "A Rose Garden," by T. E. Ryan.

For Monday, March 3rd, Mr. Chute had arranged a benefit performance of the pantomime on behalf of the Fund of the Crimea and Indian Mutiny veterans, and one of the most delightful episodes of that occasion was the appearance in the Doll Land scene of some eighty to ninety of these heroes assembled on the stage. Mr. Chute's cheque towards the

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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cause was for £122 15s. 4d. The last performance was on March 15th, but on February 10th, 1892, Mr. Charles Wyndham and Miss Mary Moore had given a flying matinee visit, appearing in "David Garrick."

"When we were Twenty-one" brought us Mr. J. C. Grahame, and "English Nell" Miss Florence St. John, as Nell Gwyn. In the "Casino Girl" Company were Misses Isa and Maggie Bowmah and Gabrielle Ray.

"The Man from Blankleys" was followed by "The Toreador"; "The Private Secretary," and "Box and Cox" brought Miss Augusta Haviland, as Mrs. Stead and Mrs. Bouncer in these respective plays.

For Mr. Chute's benefit "The Geisha" was performed, and Mr. Wilkie Bard sang some of his popular pantomime ditties.

In returning thanks that night for their continued patronage, Mr. Chute prepared the audience for structural alterations previous to the re-opening.

THE NEW PRINCE'S.—No detailed description of the change brought about could so adequately impress the minds of old playgoers as can an inspection of the Prince's of the present day, a delightful home of drama, elegant, commodious, comfortable, and, in the main, convenient. Beyond this interior reform was a complete renovation of the front elevation, the parapet being surmounted by classic figures representing Tragedy, Comedy, Orpheus, and Terpsichore; but the atmosphere rendering these somewhat insecure as time progressed, they were removed July 17th, 1915. Otherwise, the design of Mr. Frank Matcham remains unaffected.

A very interesting item in the Prince's Theatre of to-day is to be encountered at the foot of the staircase leading to the dress circle, etc., smoking lounge and refreshment room, in a tribute of the great Macready, executed in Carrara marble, and bearing the following inscription:—

### *TO WILLIAM CHARLES MACREADY*

in commemoration of his Management of the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden,

in the Seasons 1837-8, and 1838-9

when his personation of the characters, his restorations of the text and his illustration by the best intellectual aids of the historical facts, and poetical creations

of the plays of

SHAKESPEARE

formed an epoch in theatrical annals alike honourable to his own genius and elevating in its influence upon public taste.

This Testimonial is presented by the lovers of the National Drama.

The Prince's Theatre now affords seating accommodation for 1,769

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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persons: stalls, 57; dress circle, 103; balcony, 122; fauteuils, 137; upper circle and amphitheatre, 300; pit, 518; gallery, 500; whilst 32 can be accommodated in the private boxes.

In response to an invitation issued by Mr. and Mrs. Chute, some four to five hundred theatre patrons visited the theatre on the Saturday preceding the opening of the autumn season, in order that the effect of the reconstruction might be contemplated with greater leisure, and it is indeed superfluous to record their unanimous verdict; whilst of those who had seen service in the cause in the Theatre Royal days were Mr. James Sheering, who for fifty-seven years had been box-keeper at the theatres: firstly to Mrs. Macready, then through each succeeding management. Mrs. Shapcott, the mistress of the theatre wardrobe, another old and faithful servant, having likewise entered upon her duties under Mrs. Macready, and that so far back as October 21st, 1852, it required but a few weeks to bring her to her jubilee in that position, which fine record of service she was able to complete, for it was not until after the production of "The Sleeping Beauty," the pantomime of 1904-5, that she was succeeded in the wardrobe management by her daughter; and Mrs. Milward, who died in the following November, had for upwards of thirty-two years been housekeeper at Park Row. I remember an occasion when Mrs. Milward became the central and most striking figure on the stage, although I forget in which of the pantomimes this occurred. In the finale of a transformation scene there issued from the back of the stage the traditional tableau of Britannia, helmeted and with trident in hand, surrounded by representatives of the Navy and Army, England, Scotland, and Ireland, and the entire group being brought down to the footlights. Mrs. Milward personated Britannia.

The Savoy Company opened the ball in the new surroundings on August 11th, 1902, by performing for the first time out of London the comic opera, "Merrie England"; and next Edna May made her introductory bow to a Bristol audience in the character of Edna Branscombe in "Three Little Maids," the Caddie therein being capitably impersonated by Mr. Bertie Wright. "The Silver Slipper" followed, with Miss Lily Elsie, Miss Irene Verona, etc., in the company.

"The Little French Milliner" "The Christian King," and then came "H.M.S. Irresponsible," with Mr. Arthur Roberts in the last named, preceding the Carl Rosa Company, their new production being "Tristan and Isolde," with Mr. E. C. Hedmond and Miss Lucile Hill in the name parts.

"My Lady Molly" Company, with Miss Sybil Arundale and Miss Decima Moore, was here at the beginning of December, and was followed by Henry Irving and Ellen Terry, in whose company were now Miss Mabel Hackney and Mr. Laurence Irving.

It was during this engagement that death claimed Mr. G. R. Chapman, the Prince's popular conductor.



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## The Bristol Stage

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MR. GEORGE CHAPMAN was born in London, September 4th, 1840, his father likewise being a musical conductor. As early as 1858 he found his way to Bristol, and although practically self-taught was included amongst the theatre violinists upon such occasions as during the engagements of Madl. Rudersdorff and other famous operatic vocalists, when an augmented orchestra was required. It was during this early experience that he met Miss Kate Mandlebert, who in 1861 left our city in order to join her sister, Miss (Lizzie) Mandlebert, who had become a great favourite at the Grecian Theatre, London.

Mr. Chapman then reverted to his native heath, and after engagements at the then popular Cremorne Gardens; and then Standard Theatre, as also subsequent to their marriage, the young couple returned to Bristol under a joint engagement, Mr. Chapman then taking his seat as *répétiteur*. It was at the opening of the New Theatre Royal that Mr. Chapman was first appointed conductor of the orchestra, the increasing deafness of Mr. Salmon resulting in missed cues, etc. At such times as the old gentleman recognized that something had gone wrong, it was his custom to indulge in a stamping upon the orange-box, or what it was that formed his footstool, hoping to convey to the audience that the fiasco was that of the musicians and not his own.

Not until 1868 had Weston-super-Mare known the charm of a high-class promenade band ! but by a little manipulation of dates, to which Mr. J. H. Chute became a willing party, Mr. Chapman was enabled in that year to accept the commission to provide one, a very early engagement of his for the purpose being that of Mr. George Webb, who came from across the Bristol Channel, he being retained for the New Theatre orchestra, and also for the 1st Gloucestershire Rifle Volunteers band, of which Mr. Chapman was then bandmaster, and to which latter position Mr. George Webb succeeded.

For D'Oyly Carte, Mr. Chapman conducted "The Pirates of Penzance" throughout a provincial tour.

Seated in his official chair, Mr. G. R. Chapman was an autocrat ; his method, however, was in the direction of cynical pain at shortcomings, rather than that of the *fortiter in re*, for I have seen him at rehearsal, when some unfortunate instrumentalist has gone astray, quietly lay his *baton* upon the desk, and stare absently upon the stage, whereon was nothing to claim his attention. Then—"the last eight bars of the previous movement, please !" and after a moment or so for the bars to be discovered, all else would proceed like marriage bells, and as though nothing had interrupted.

Mr. George Russell Chapman, to give the conductor's baptismal belonging, was from top to toe a sportsman ! Cycling, cricket, rowing (he was a member of several cycling as also of the Ariel Rowing Clubs), rural walks, paper-chases, and, indeed, all out-door sports and recreation came his way. He was also an energetic "governor" of the Arts Club, and

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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responsible for many of the delightful musical nights at that unique institution ; and so also did he dearly love a quiet hand of whist.

Quick in temper, a characteristic as readily recognized by himself as by others, Mr. Chapman was as speedy to forget and forgive.

Many entertaining and amusing anecdotes I could relate in which my old friend played a leading part, but here is one very much apropos of the work upon which I am now engaged. At one of the visits of the Carl Rosa Opera Company, Mr. Eugene Goossens, sen., being the conductor, the stage band in "*Faust*," by missing the cue about half a beat, and not recognizing the fact until they faced the footlights, the soldiers' chorus was virtually "all over the shop." Probably the walls of the Prince's never echoed to such a sound hissing from the auditorium as ensued, and that not even as a characteristic compliment to the villain of a play. Upon the occasion of the next visit, Mr. Goossens somewhat naturally being on thorns, the position was reversed, and few operatic encores have been more unmistakable than that which compelled the soldiers' band to make its re-entry and again complete the number. Mr. George R. Chapman, being an excellent trombone player, had donned the stage uniform costume and led his musicians in triumph, both on to and off the stage.

A bitter easterly wind, coupled with a November fog, resulted in a sharp attack of pneumonia, from which he died on December 10th, 1902, at the age of sixty-two years.

## CHAPTER XXI

A.D. 1902

"CINDERELLA," with its beautiful scenery, the ball-room, by K. J. McLennan, in which one saw the grand ballet of fans; the castle gardens, by George A. Jackson, with its electrically illuminated fairy coach for Cinderella; and the great scene of the wedding fête, by T. E. Ryan, with costumes designed by J. Howell Russell, will not readily be forgotten. Yet Mr. Chute's mind had not been easy during its preparation, for Mr. Howard Russell's health had suffered greatly. So also had that of Mr. Henry Owen, the master carpenter, who since 1867 had produced such striking effects in both pantomime and drama, and, sad to relate, this was the last of the Christmas productions in which he contributed to its success. Mr. Owen died at the close of 1916. Then again it had been a near thing that the wedding scene itself had not been conspicuous by its absence rather than by its charm, for shortly before the production of "Cinderella," Mr. Ryan's studio in Walworth Road, London, was burnt to the ground, much scenery for Drury Lane and provincial pantomime being totally destroyed. Luckily, Mr. Chute had issued his commission for Cinderella's wedding scene immediately upon the success of Mr. Ryan's "rose garden" in the previous pantomime, so the complete scene had been painted and then stored at the Shaftesbury Theatre. Cinderella was represented by Miss Nora Brocklebank; the Prince, Miss Florence Lloyd; Dandini, Miss Daisie Wallace; Peter, Will Evans; and the Baron, Mr. J. Humphries. Mr. Clement Locknane conducted the orchestra, and, with a special performance for the "Lord Mayor's Hospital Fund," at which Miss Helen Mar assisted, the pantomime ran until March 7th, 1903. There had been Mrs. Brown Potter at a matinee. Mr. and Mrs. Kendal followed, and on their opening night, with "The Elder Miss Blossom," Mr. G. R. Chapman first occupied the conductor's seat in the orchestra, he being accorded a warm welcome from all parts of the house. Then there was a flying matinee, with Dan Leno.

The spring season wound up with Sir Francis Burnand's amusing comedy "Betsy," Mr. Chute taking his benefit on June 29th with W. G. Wills' "Chatterton," placed in the hands of amateurs, these including Mr. R. W. Andean, soon to blossom into an accomplished professional.



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## *The Bristol Stage*

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Mr. Richard W. Andean must be grouped with many other Bristol citizens who have made good upon the stage. Long a member of the D'Oyly Carte Company, he has also visited the Dominions, and in the English provinces has been successful in comedies that have demonstrated no little versatility in his methods.

Sir Francis Burnand's comedy, "Saucy Sally," with Mr. Laurence Brough and Miss Eva Chapman, followed and completed the programme.

Mr. Forbes Robertson in "The Light that Failed" was accompanied by Mr. Sydney Brough, and on September 21st Miss Marie Tempest paid her first visit to our city, securing a triumph in the "Marriage of Kitty," after which amusing comedy "The Eternal City," by Hall Caine, held possession of the stage.

The "absolute farewell visit of Mr. George Edwardes' Company" in "San Toy" was threatened for the week commencing October 12th, 1903. But little things like these, in the theatrical world "gang aft agley." There was an excellent cast, though—Misses Marie Studholme, Minnie Hunt, Violet Lloyd, Alice Lethbridge and Louie Collier, Messrs. Horace and Stratton Mills, Colin Coop, Herbert Clayton and W. H. Rawlins.

The Carl Rosa Company produced Giordeno's opera, "Andre Chenier," whilst the following week introduced Justin Huntley McCarthy's romantic play, "If I were King," this being succeeded by J. M. Barrie's "Quality Street."

"Cousin Kate," with Miss Madge McIntosh, and an amateur night in behalf of the Commercial Travellers' Schools, brought us to Mr. Hickory Wood's pantomime "Puss in Boots." There was a truly excellent company of *artistes*, amongst them being Misses Lil Hawthorne, Minnie Hunt, Jenny Edgar, Nellie Stratton, Eva Chapman and Fanny Maitland; Messrs. Wilkie Bard, Frank Danby, Martin Adeson, W. D. Hurst (who played Puss), and Griffin and Dusoio, fun-workers. Until March 12th the pantomime held sway during the evening, but towards the end of January three consecutive mornings were devoted to performances of the whimsical dream, "Alice in Wonderland."

It was at this time that there was a strong movement towards the banning of children being engaged on the stage, and the Bristol Board of Guardians appeared quite ready to go even further, for upon receipt of Mr. James Macready Chute's customary invite to the workhouse children to visit a pantomime matinee, by thirty-two voices to nineteen that august body refused permission. *Truth*, in its comments, says: "The report states that a similar invitation to the imbeciles was accepted. No doubt the manager of the theatre will admit under this head the thirty-two Bumbles responsible for depriving the children of an afternoon's innocent amusement."

Oh! by the way! I must not forget that before the Bristol pantomime company dispersed, they indulged in football at the Rovers'

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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ground. The result was £225 towards extinguishing the Infirmary debt. I never heard what the "Guardians" thought of that!

On February 8th, 1904, Miss Mary Moore presented "Mrs. Gorringer's Necklace." "A Chinese Honeymoon," on April 4th, and during the week commencing May 2nd Mr. E. S. Willard with his intense impersonation, "The Cardinal," and Barrie's delightful comedy, "The Professor's Love Story," drew large and admiring audiences. These constituted this excellent actor's last appearances in Bristol.

Miss Ada Reeve brought "Winnie Brooke, Widow," and for Whitsuntide Mr. Charles Frohman sent "Sherlock Holmes," with Mr. Julian Royce in the name part, whilst on June 6th Henry Irving, accompanied by Miss Mabel Hackney and Mr. Gerald Laurence, commenced a week's performance, presenting "Waterloo" and "The Bells," "Merchant of Venice," "Louis XI," and "Becket." When the distinguished actor visited our city in March, 1867, a complimentary luncheon had been given him at the Liberal Club, under the presidency of Mr. E. G. Clarke, and to mark the continued appreciation of Sir Henry's transcendent stage abilities, which was entertained in the home of his youthful days, a similar function was arranged to take place at the Royal Hotel on June 10th, and here, with Mr. Goodenough Taylor in the chair and Mr. George E. Davies in the vice-chair, Sir Henry Irving was surrounded by an assembly of admirers whose presence tested the capacity of the banquet hall to its utmost limit, very many would-be participators being unable to secure tickets. Amongst those present were the High Sheriff of Bristol and Mrs. Greville Edwards, the Bishop of Clifton, the Master of the Society of Merchant Venturers and Mrs. Allan McArthur, Rev. H. J. Wilkins, M.A., and, needless to state, a very extensive contingent of those associated with the drama and its companion arts.

At this function Sir Henry was seated in the handsome chair which had been provided for the Victorian Prince Consort upon the occasion in 1843 of his visiting the city for the purpose of christening the s.s. *Great Britain*, the leviathan of the period which had been designed by J. K. Brunel, and at a cost of £100,000 built by the Patterson Bros. at Bristol. Long in the possession of Mr. Hugh Conway (author of "Called Back"), it had been bequeathed by him to Mrs. Villiers, and by that lady kindly lent for this auspicious occasion. Amongst others present at that historic launch was Sir Henry Irving, his father, then resident at the top of Picton Street, having taken him, at the age of five years, to witness that event which all Bristol had turned out to be present at.

The *menu* and toast list provided at the Royal Hotel luncheon was, in more ways than one, a work of art, its title page representing Sir Henry Irving in one of the last and most striking situations of Becket, "I go to meet my King," whilst the following graceful lines appearing within its pages were from the well-known pen of our fellow-citizen poet, Mr. F. E. Weatherley:—

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## The Bristol Stage

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" Let other hands the laurel bring  
To crown thee on the stage.  
Let other lips thy homage sing,  
First actor of the age!  
We bring a flower that will outlive  
The summer and the snow,  
Rosemary—for remembrance,  
That will not let thee go!"

During the period devoted to the repast a selected orchestra, under the direction of Mr. Fred Chapman, deputy-conductor at the Prince's (Mr. George Chapman being seated at the festive board), assisted digestion with some delightful music, and in the course of post-prandial proceedings Mrs. Villiers recited a three scenes poem, penned for the occasion by Pattie E. Varnam Coggan, of Somerton. Mrs. Villiers, it may be remembered, took part with Mr. Sims Reeves in light opera on his appearance at the Prince's in 1869, but may possibly be more readily recognized as Miss Ada Jackson, a favourite vocalist of the Clifton concert platform, her elder sister, Miss Jane Jackson, being even better known as an accomplished *pianiste* and as the bride at his first marriage of Mr. Roedel, the composer.

Speeches were not many, but, as Jacky says in Charles Reade's "Never too Late to Mend," "a good deal wise," the chairman proposing the toast of Our Guest, Sir Henry Irving responding in a graceful and cultured strain, the vice-chairman giving the Drama, and Mr. James Macready Chute making reply.

The spring season at the Prince's terminated with "A Marriage of Convenience," Mr. F. R. Benson and his company giving, at a matinee, the Orestean trilogy of "Aeschylus," which our old friends, the pantomime knock-about, might have regarded as very nearly approaching "the class'cal."

For Mr. Chute's benefit, on July 4th, Miss Haidee Gunn appeared as "King Rene's Daughter" and Mr. Arthur Holmes-Gore in "Just Like Callaghan."

July 15th welcomed Mme. Sarah Bernhardt in "La Dame aux Camelias," the prices of admission being: stalls, 12/6; dress circle and fauteuils, 10/6; balcony, 7/6; upper circle, 5/- and 4/-; pit, 2/6; gallery, 1/-; private boxes, three and two guineas.

The autumn season was inaugurated by "Sweet and Twenty," Messrs. George Miller and Lionel Glenister being to the fore, and next came Henry Arthur Jones' comedy, "Whitewashing Julia," with one of the Bristol stage's children, Miss Kate Bishop, she being accompanied by her distinguished daughter, Miss Marie Löhr.

Miss Louie Freear preceded Miss Ellen Terry, supported in *repertoire* by Miss Audrey Campbell and Hutin Britton, Messrs. Alfred Bucklaw, John Willes, Matheson Lang, Harcourt Williams and others.



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## *The Bristol Stage*

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"The Money Makers," having amongst its exponents Miss Muriel Ashwynne and Miss Mary Griffiths in their original parts, with Miss Florence Terry and Mr. Allen Thomas also in the cast, was the following attraction, and proved itself a delightfully bright one.

Next came Mr. Forbes Robertson and Miss Getrude Elliott in "Mice and Men" and "The Light that Failed," and on October 3rd Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, producing for the first time in Bristol "Dick Hope"—not the pick of their repertoire by any means.

Mr. Tree's company, representing "The Darling of the Gods," was quite a powerful one, embracing as it did Misses Lilian Stafford, Augusta Haviland, Lorraine Stevens, Sybil Glynn and Isma Foldi, Messrs. G. W. Anson, Alexandra Calvert, Huntley Carter, Lang, Kennerley Jones, Ralph Hutton, Robert Gray, etc. A week with Benson's company followed, and then came Miss Stella Gaspelle and Eric Thorne in "Amorelle," Tuesday giving opportunity for a complimentary benefit matinee to Mr. Fred. Chapman, whose health had given way, and vacating his many years' seat in the orchestra, he was following that gifted contingent with which the Prince's Theatre had favoured Australia, amongst whom, I remember, were Mr. George Rignold, Mr. and Mrs. George Gordon (Miss Marion Jones), Mr. W. H. and Miss Minnie Harford, and Mr. E. W. Coleman, the three last-named gentlemen being of our most successful comic actors.

The musical play, "The Cingalee," was introduced here in November, Miss Florence Smithson and Mr. Frank Danby being amongst its exponents, Miss Lena Ashwell following with "Marguerite" and "Mrs. Dane's Defence"; after which was one of the most delightful engagements of the season, Miss Evie Greene, Miss Adrienne Augarde, Mr. Courtice Pounds and Mr. Holbrook Blinn taking part in Ivan Caryll's charming light opera, "The Duchess of Danzig."

Miss Julia Neilson and Mr. Fred Terry in "Sunday" were followed by "Little Mary" company. The 1904-5 pantomime was entitled "The Sleeping Beauty," written by Mr. J. Hickory Wood, whose baptismal name, by-the-by, did not contain the "Hickory"—that was a suggestion of his wife, whilst searching for a distinctive fore-name. Lyrics were by Mr. J. Dudley Smith, scenery by Messrs. George Jackson, Ernest Howard and E. H. Ryan, the company consisting of Misses Zena Dare, Maud Darling, Anita Penrose and Lil Hawthorne, with Messrs. David Miller, Charles Arnold and George Miller. Before the Bristol pantomime companies dispersed, there was again a dramatic and licensed victuallers carnival at the Rovers' football field, which realized the handsome sum of £225 towards extinguishing the debt existing upon the Royal Infirmary.

During its run, however, there had been three matinees with "Alice in Wonderland," Mr. Arthur Bouchier and Miss Violet Vanbrugh had appeared in the "Walls of Jericho" (a fine play), Mrs. Langtry and

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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Leonard Boyne in "Mrs. Dering's Divorce," and Mr. George Alexander with Miss Lillian Braithwaite, brought a novel programme, of which the "Flower o' the Rose" was the chief item.

Israel Zangwill's comedy, "Merely Mary Ann," was the next novelty, and in this Mr. George Belmore and Miss Alice Esden awoke old memories, "The Duke of Killicrankie" following; whilst at Easter Mr. Martin Harvey produced the "Breed of the Treshams" and also essayed "Hamlet." "Beauty and the Barge" brought Mr. Blake Adams and also Miss Mary Griffiths, and the second edition of "The Orchid," Mr. George Gregory and Mr. E. W. Coleman. There was a matinee, with Madame Sarah Bernhardt in "La Sorciere," Mr. Chute winding up the season on June 24th, under the customary patronage, and giving his audience "Who's Who," with Miss Maud Darling, Miss Eva Chapman and Messrs. George Miller, Stanley Cooke and Lionel Victor, this being followed by Mr. Brandon Thomas in a recitation, and concluding with his wonderfully successful comedy, "Charley's Aunt."

For the funds of St. Augustine schools Mr. Arthur Holmes-Gore on July 18th gave a novel performance, consisting of an amusing episode entitled "The Fatal Stocking." It contained two characters only, these being represented by Miss Lillian Rogers and himself. The other item was a playlet from his own pen, entitled "In the Arena," and in this he was supported by his daughter, who was making her *debut*.

Early in the autumn season a theatrical novelty in "A Trip to the Highlands" brought Miss Isa Bowman and Mr. Harry Fischer, and in September a rattling musical comedy, "The Prince of Pilsen," in which Mr. John Humphries and Mr. William Pringle kept the audience in a roar of laughter.

Ellen Terry followed, appearing in a comedy by J. M. Barrie, written for her use and entitled, "Alice, Sit by the Fire," the following attraction being a pantomime trifle also written by Mr. Barrie and entitled, "Pantaloon." This, however, required some memory of the harlequinade pantomimes to be entirely appreciated, either in its plot or methods, but to such amongst the audience as were thus posted, it appealed as a dramatic gem. Columbine was Miss Pauline Chase; Harlequin, Hubert Willis; Clown, Lichfield Owen; Pantaloon, A. S. Homewood; and the child, Miss Geraldine Wilson.

Mr. John Hare, after an absence of thirteen years, was welcomed in some of his long-time favourite parts. He also produced "Julius Sterne," a play by Sydney Grundy, and further Eccles in "Caste," in which comedy he had been the original Sam Gerridge. Personally, I disliked the change. Some time subsequently I saw "Caste," with John Hare as Eccles, on a film, and I wondered whether, could Tom Robertson also see it, he would recognize his play or approve the new finale. Evidently papa Eccles had not retired "to Jersey, where spirits are cheap," in the laudable attempt to "drink himself to death in a twelvemonth,"

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## The Bristol Stage

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for he was standing at the side of a cot and nursing Hester's baby. Somehow the picture appeared incomplete, for Sam Gerridge and the Marquise should have been bending over in appreciation, or executing a *pas de deux* at the back of the scene, whilst Polly and Hawtree indulged in a mild flirtation.

Mr. Tree's production of "The Tempest" came next, revealing in Mr. G. W. Anson a fine exponent of the character of Caliban. Miss Marie Studholme in "Lady Madcap" followed.

"Mother Goose," with Wilkie Bard, Edward Lewis, Marriott Edgar, Bros. Griffiths, Rich and Rich, and Fred Conquest, the last of whom made a public conquest as a marvellously clever Goose, had also an excellent troupe of lady *artistes* in Misses Lily Morris, Nina Wood and Happy Fanny Fields. Large audiences assembled at each representation, these continuing until the evening of March 17th, 1906, no less than ninety-seven performances having been given.

In February a special matinee on behalf of Sir George White's £50,000 Bristol Royal Infirmary scheme, and, as the result had been enabled to send Sir George a cheque for £327 16s. 2d.

Mr. Bouchier and Miss Violet Vanburgh had given a matinee with "Brother Officers"; and Mr. Charles Wyndham, having in his company Miss Mary Moore and Marion Terry, being seen at another in "Captain Drew on Leave."

Mr. Forbes Robertson next, again appearing in "Mice and Men" (a great performance), and also in a new play by Madeliene Lucette Ryley, entitled "Mrs. Grundy"; Mr. Martin Harvey followed with "After All," the subject of which was suggested by "Eugene Aram," the next attraction being the "Spring Chicken," in which appeared Misses Irene Verona, Gertrude Gillian, Nellie Lonnen and Gertrude Glyn, Messrs. L. W. Harris, Nelson Keys, Duncan Kaye and George Gregory.

"Sergeant Brue" was the Easter attraction, this giving way to a semi-local production of "Romeo and Juliet," the chief parts being in the hands of Miss Haidee Gunn and Mr. Rosner.

MR. CHARLES ARNOLD.—Our fellow-citizen in this production filled the humble *rôle* of Montague—his name did not appear in the cast, the part being undertaken at the eleventh hour owing to the non-arrival of an actor. This was Mr. Arnold's last appearance upon the Bristol stage, the boards of which he had trodden since the '60's.

A conscientious actor at all times, he held the especial regard of Mr. Barry Sullivan, Mr. W. H. Vernon, and the Rignolds.

Previous to his joining Mr. Chute's company he was engaged as a law-writer, and up to the end of his life wrote absolutely like "copper-plate." Towards the close of his histrionic career Mr. Arnold suffered severely from a weak heart, and retired to Southend-on-Sea, where he expired July 2nd, 1917.



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## *The Bristol Stage*

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Mr. R. C. Carton's three-act farce, "Public Opinion," scarcely caught that of Bristol in its most liberal vein, and the powerful play, "Leah Kleschna," met with more favourable results.

Mr. Lewis Waller with Miss Evelyn Millard, and in the company Mr. Frank Danby, experienced a week of enthusiasm whilst performing "Brigadier Gerard," the part fitting him like a glove. He also gave a fine rendering of a monologue play by Henry Hamilton, "Fortune's Fool." Mr. George Graves appeared in the "Little Michus," whilst in the "White Chrysanthemum" Messrs. W. H. Rawlins and Horace Mills, this preceding his "House in Order," in the cast of which was Mr. A. Alexander, another of Bristol's old-time stock company.

Carl Rosa Opera Company, with Mesdames Doris Woodhall, Elizabeth Burgess, Grace Nicoll and Ina Hill, Messrs. Edward Davies, Julius Walther, Arthur Winkworth and Dillon Shallard, was followed by Tree's production of "Oliver Twist," Misses Maudie Ray (Oliver), Marie Polini, Elsie Carew, Messrs. William Mackintosh (Fagan), Cecil A. Collins, Tom Macfarlane and Max Montesole being chiefs in the powerful cast.

Mr. Hayden Coffin and Miss Isabel Jay in the "Girl Behind the Counter," followed by Mr. James Welch in "When Knights were Bold"—which charmed by reason of its great originality and his fine interpretation—and next Miss Mabel Love in the "Freedom of Suzanne," completed what struck me as a splendidly booked autumn season of introductions to our city, but I think that about this period it probably would have been difficult for the most favoured theatrical centre to have surpassed the Prince's in a season's attractions.

"Humpty Dumpty," 1906-7, excellent amongst recent productions, and achieved success. To Mr. Fred Conquest I award the palm, and, as comparisons are odious, I will simply say that his performance in the title rôle was as finished and attractive as had been his clever performance as the goose. Mr. Bert Gilbert, Mr. Horace Mills and "Carlton" were seen to advantage, the Griffiths Bros., posing as a lion and not a Jerusalem, as was their wont, were intensely humorous. Miss Sybil Arundale and Miss Maud Darling both became exceptional favourites during the run of the piece, which obtained a distinctly local flavour from the inclusion of Miss Olive Crellin, daughter of Mr. Harry Crellin and his wife, Miss Mary Ellen White, as Prince Spritely, and of Miss Winnie Volt, daughter of Mr. T. Volt and his better half, Miss Nellie Bouverie, as the Princess. Mr. Cyril Thompson was a fine Demon and Miss Hebe Bliss an excellent Fairy Queen.

Bristol playgoers had by this time quite appreciated the convenience of the early queue at the theatre entrance, but to some of the excursionists who visited pantomime its regulations were not so familiar. Two Cardiffians, bent upon securing good seats, took their places at the end of the queue, which at an early hour had extended some distance down Park Street Avenue, and gradually, as the earlier arrivals entered the

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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theatre, the two advanced until they were opposite the doors of the hotel. It was a rather unpleasant evening, so they decided to have "Just one" before taking their seats. They were but a minute or so gone, and on returning essayed to take up their old position in the procession, but learnt to their dismay that they must conform with the regulation, and proceed to the rearmost rank. Ultimately they found themselves at the theatre doors, but only to be confronted with the ominous announcement, "House Full!"

The acting-manager, who chanced to be standing on the steps, heard them bewail their fate in having come from Cardiff only to meet with bitter disappointment. "We took our tickets over there a week ago, so as to be safe," he was told. "You did; let me see them. Yes, that's all right. Balcony 41 and 42. Go right in; your seats are patiently awaiting you." And such they found was indeed the case and that their half-hour in the queue and drizzling rain had been entirely unnecessary.

Miss Ada Blanche followed the pantomime with "What the Butler Saw," then came the "Dairymaids," the "Blue Moon," and then "San Toy," with Horace Mills, Miss Olive Crellin as Dudley, and Miss Hebe Bliss in the cast.

The production of "Peter Pan" proved a most successful venture, its twelve evening and four morning performances attracting ever-increasing audiences. Miss Zena Dare was Peter Pan; Miss Ela May, Wendy; Liza, Miss Mabel Lamont; Nana, Mr. George Lupino; Starkey, Mr. Stratton Mills; Smee, Mr. G. W. Anson; whilst Mr. Darling and the pirate Hook were both represented by that fine actor, Mr. Lionel Mackinder. Take it all round, I have never seen Barrie's whimsical play more satisfactorily represented. Lionel Mackinder! He was seen later in the year in "Our Miss Gibbs," and in the spring of 1908 "The Girls of Gottenberg," but neither earlier nor later in a character in which he so revelled as in that of Captain Hook. I can see him now, the personification of a boy's ideal pirate, standing with his back to the ship's mast, puffing vigorously at his pipe, and from his nostrils emitting veritable clouds of smoke. When in 1914 the call to arms found response in such unexpected quarters, there was no Britisher more ready to fight than he. Dyeing his moustache, although over military age, he "joined up." It was whilst cheering his comrades in the trenches by singing some of their favourite songs that he fell victim to the bullet of a Hun sniper, which took him in the throat. Of the 250 British actors to whom, in unveiling the memorial tablet in the vestibule of Drury Lane Theatre, in February, 1919, the Bishop of London paid handsome tribute, none had been more ready, and few earlier in voluntarily risking the supreme sacrifice for the Empire and for civilization than had Lionel Mackinder.

Mr. Arthur Holmes-Gore—another excellent actor victim of the brutal war—was next seen in "A Message from Mars," and this (May 18th, 1907), I am disposed to think, was his last appearance here, and on the

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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Friday of his engagement Madame Hading and her company appeared in "Frou-Frou."

Mr. Seymour Hicks as "Scrooge," supported by Miss Zena Dare, closed the spring season, the theatre being reopened on Bank Holiday (August 5th) with "Amasis," Miss Winifred O'Connor, Messrs. Rutland Barrington and Lauri de Frece taking part, Mr. Leonard Boyne as "Raffles," "John Gladye's Honour," and next Mr. H. B. Irving, with Miss Dorothy Baird, in a round of his father's successes.

"Peter's Mother" was succeeded by Mr. Lewis Waller, with whom was Mr. Shiel Barry, in "Robin Hood," and next by Mr. Forbes Robertson in "Cæsar and Cleopatra," that delightful comedy, "Mice and Men," "The Light that Failed," and "Hamlet."

Miss Evie Greene was seen in "The Lady Dandies," whilst December 2nd introduced us to G. B. S.'s dramatic works, "You Never Can Tell" and "John Bull's Other Island," both proving most attractive fare. Miss Kate Cutler in "All-of-a-sudden-Peggy," and the customary amateur night, brought us to "Jack and Jill," a delightful pantomime made glorious by Misses Lily Morris, Maude Aston and Mabel Russell, Messrs. Tom E. Murray, George Miller, Nipper Lane, Fred Allandale, and H. Lupino.

Mr. Arthur Bouchier and Miss Violet Vanburgh in "Simple Simon," Mr. Tree in "Trilby," Mr. Charles Hawtrey in "Dear Old Charlie," Mr. Cyril Maude, with whom were the Misses Winifred and Pollie Emery and Madge Titheradge, in "Fido," and Mr. Arthur Bouchier again, but accompanied on this occasion by Miss Marie Lohr, in "Her Father," gave evidence, by reason of the free patronage accorded each, how popular the flying matinee had become, and neither was the pantomime less successful than the "fliers," drawing as it did crowded audiences until March 14th, 1908.

"The Girls of Gottenberg," finely cast, with Misses Dolly Castles and Coralie Blythe, Messrs. Fred Payne, George Gregory and Lionel Mackinder, certainly kept the ball of laughter vein attraction rolling in fine style, whilst on March 23rd came Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, appearing in a new play, "The Whirlpool," a piece I liked very much. London was not, however, destined to judge of its merits, for even as this was the last visit of these accomplished actors to Mrs. Kendal's native city, so also did it mark their practical retirement from the stage.

MR. W. H. KENDAL—or, to give him his correct name, William Hunter Grimston—was the son of an artist, and, although born in London, we of Bristol, as by his marriage association, have come to look upon him as of our own. Educated for the musical profession, he was more desirous of following his father's artistic views, and some of his sketches being seen by the manager of the Soho theatre (now the Royalty), that worthy granted young Grimston the free run of the house, both before



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## The Bristol Stage

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and behind the curtain. It was at that theatre that on April 6th, 1861, in the name of "Kendal," the young man made his first appearance on the stage, the play being entitled, "A Life's Revenge." Later, Mr. Kendal migrated to a minor theatre at Birmingham and subsequently to the Theatre Royal, Glasgow, where for four years he remained a member of the stock company, playing parts ranging from pantomime demon to Shakespearean lead. Charles Matthews, who met him there, recommended him to Buckstone, whereupon he was engaged as a member of the Haymarket Company, there meeting with "*Our Madge*"—I should say, Miss Madge Robertson—and in 1869 they were married. Kendal was a delightful man, and in the height of his wife's and his own popularity had no particle of "side" about him. Indeed, as to his own merits he was especially modest, and tradition has it that when cast for a leading part at Buckstone's fashionable theatre, he said to Mrs. Kendal, "But I can't really act," the lady making reply, "Don't you worry about that. *I'll* act; you look handsome," and, by Jove! both could well play their respective parts. But if Kendal was not a great actor, he was a good one, and in "Diplomacy," "London Assurance," "The Whirlpool," etc., he was excellent. Born December 16th, 1843, he died November, 1917. Mr. Kendal Grimston, his only son, is musical conductor at the Playhouse, London.

A Drury Lane production, the "Prodigal Son," followed the Kendals, and then was next seen a remarkably satisfactory performance of "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch," Mrs. Madge Carr Cook as Mrs. Wiggs, Miss Louise Glosson as Miss Hazy, Miss Christine Rayner as Lovey Mary, Mr. Frederick Forrest, Tom Viney; Mr. George Howard, Mr. Stubbins; and Mr. Edward Coventry as Mr. Hunkerdunkus Jones.

Miss Annie Hughes brought from the Criterion "The Mollusc," and Mr. Chas. Frohmann sent "The Hypocrites," Henry Arthur Jones' fine play, Mr. Leslie Faber appearing as the Curate and Miss Winifred Arthur Jones as Mrs. Wilmore, Mr. William Mollison and Miss Evelyn McNay following in Shakespearean plays. "Sherlock Holmes," with Mr. H. Hamilton Stewart, followed.

Mr. Oscar Asche and Miss Lily Brayton, who next made their first appearances in Bristol as joint "Stars," were wonderfully successful during their week, presented "Taming of the Shrew" and "As you Like it."

With the first visit of "The Merry Widow," "Miss Hook of Holland," of "The Gay Gordons," with Miss Zena Dare and Mr. Seymour Hicks in the cast of the last-named musical comedy, and Miss Phyllis Dare making her earliest appearance at the Prince's, playing Peggy in "The Dairymaids," the autumn was kept both merry and bright, other notable and welcome engagements being those of Miss Lena Ashwell in "Diana of Dobsons" and "Irene Wycherly," Bernard Shaw's "Arms and the Man" and "Man and Superman," Mr. Edward Terry in "Sweet Lavender,"

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## The Bristol Stage

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"Kerry," "Liberty Hall," etc., Mr. George Alexander and Miss Irene Vanburgh in that excellent play, "The Thief," and Mr. F. R. Benson with a fine staging of "Midsummer Night's Dream." The autumn of 1908 had proved exceptionally deserving of a place in one's memory.

For some time Mr. Benson had entertained a great desire to introduce this production to the somewhat select theatrical audience of Great Malvern, as with the rendering of the whole of Mendelssohn's associated music, he felt that it was one of which he might indeed be proud. So, Mr. C. R. Chapman, owing to a week of opera there, being released at the Prince's, arrangements were made for him to proceed to Malvern and conduct the local orchestra, a combination which Mr. Benson had been informed would be available.

Upon his arrival, Mr. Chapman discovered that the proposed orchestra consisted of the eight musicians who performed in the Abbey Gardens, and *inter alia* in the High Street—capable musicians enough in their sphere, but not too well constituted as an orchestra for Mr. Benson's purpose. However, he determined to make the best of the situation, so, having telegraphed to Bristol for a violin, he proceeded to the rehearsal, then learning to his consternation that of the local contingent but one (the trombone player) either spoke or understood English—all were Huns, every man Jack of them. His instructions were, therefore, perforce made to Herr Von Trombone, and by him, in guttural Teutonic accents, translated to his associates. All went well, though, at the performances, and, as indicated by the nightly increasing receipts, Malvernites recognized that they had their money's worth.

On the Friday Herr Trombone waited upon the conductor and delivered in his Anglo-German tongue the following pretty speech: "Mr Chapman, sir, I have come on behalf of the band to thank you for your great kindness and patience in conducting us. You are a great conductor, Mr. Chapman, sir, and you love and understand Mendelssohn, and how his music should be played. The band tell me to hope, Mr. Chapman, sir, that you will come again to Malvern to conduct the music—and please may I send a deputy to-morrow night!"

## CHAPTER XXII

A.D. 1908

"**A** LADDIN," the pantomime of 1908-9 was a good production. Miss Ouida Macdermott, Miss Deborah, Miss Topsy Sinden, Miss Florence Foster and Miss Daisy Wood being associated in the cast with Messrs. Bransby Williams, W. H. (Pip) Powell and Arthur Sutcliffe. I could not avoid the reflection that Messrs. Bransby Williams and Carlton should have exchanged pantomimes.

"Tom Jones," a lively operatic work, brought Miss Florence Smithson, with Messrs. Ambrose Manning, Harry Welshman and George Elton, whilst the following week was especially attractive, Miss Lily Brayton and Mr. Oscar Asche producing, for the first time on any stage, Stanley Weyman's romantic play "Count Hannibal."

The week commencing March 22nd was devoted to the performance of "An Englishman's Home"—not a great play, but presenting an object lesson which, together with the warning voice of Lord Roberts (Bobs), should have been more readily taken to heart by such of our rulers as had not their spiritual homes in Germany.

Two very charming operas, hitherto unseen in Bristol, occupied the following fortnight, "The Dollar Princess," with Miss Kitty Gordon, Miss Hilda Moody and Mr. Robert Michaelis, preceding "Havana," with Miss Dorothy Ward and Messrs. George Gregory, T. C. Maxwell, Fred Allandale and Maitland Marler. The naval play, "The Flag Lieutenant," followed hard upon.

Madame Jane Hading, at a matinee, presented "L'Aventuriere."

Mr. Charles Collette was seen in "My Awful Dad" and "Micawber," and with a return visit of Mr. Edward Morris, accompanied by Miss Dorothy Vernon in "The Dandy Doctor," the spring season of 1909 came to an end on June 14th.

In August the "Waltz Dream," a charming operetta by Oscar Strauss, was performed, and, whilst the orchestra consisted solely of lady instrumentalists, Mr. Robert Evett appeared in his original part, Lieutenant Niki.

"The Belle of Brittany," bringing Mr. George Graves, likewise in his original part.

Mr. Forbes Robertson having taken a farewell with "The Passing of



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## *The Bristol Stage*

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the Third Floor Back," further musical weeks ensued. "King of Cadonia" preceded the Carl Rosa Company, this being succeeded by Miss Ada Reeve in "Butterflies," Miss Ellaline Terris with the "Dashing Little Duke" coming next upon the scene, and then "Merrie England," with Misses Ethel Quarr and Messrs. Powis Pindar, Rudolph Lewis, Reginald Crompton, Ernest Torrence, Edwin Bryan, Charles Childerstone and Walter Passmore, each cast for their original characters.

Ernest Carpenter's Lyceum Company in Hall Caine and Louis Parker's play, "Pete," and next the amateurs appeared in "Our Boys," and "A Winning Hazard" brought the season to the Christmas pantomime, "Mother Hubbard." This proved an admirably cast annual, Mr. Horace Mills being throughout "top hole," Mr. Fred Conquest inimitable as dog Fido, Mr. G. H. Elliott captured the public as Chocolate, other characters being entrusted to Mr. George Barrett, Miss Sydney Fairbrother, Miss Lula Valli, etc. There was no flagging of patronage until March 12th, 1910, when the curtain fell for the last time upon Mr. George Jackson's charming scene, introducing an electrical floral tableau.

The year 1910, which comprised forty-eight weeks of theatrical enterprise, was devoted (including pantomime during twenty-seven of them) to works of a musical character, the twenty-one remaining weeks at the disposal of the dramatic side of the picture contained a liberal sprinkling of well-worn goods, such as "The Private Secretary," Benson and Compton Companies, etc. Yet the year was fairly typical of those surrounding it.

Mr. George Alexander was here for a matinee with "The Importance of being Ernest" in February, and on April 4th was produced "The Little Damozel," Mr. Julian Cross being amongst the performers, whilst with Mr. H. R. Benson, who followed, presenting amongst other plays "Winter's Tale" and "Julius Cæsar," was Mr. John Howell—two old Bristol actors.

Miss Pauline Chase as "Peter Pan" was followed by "Our Miss Gibbs," a diverting comic opera in which appeared Misses Alice Pollard and Marie Wilson, with Messrs. Lionel Mackinder and George Gregory. "Those Terrible Twins" preceded a capital week with Pelissier's "Follies," which novel entertainment brought the spring season to an end.

The autumn season of 1910 opened on August 1st with "Tantalizing Tommy," in the performance of which one saw Miss Nellie Lonnen, succeeded by "Mr. Preedy and the Countess," and later came "The Speckled Band," with Mr. C. W. Somerset as Dr. Rylett. "Smith" (Miss Cicely Stuckey), "The Dawn of To-morrow," in which Mr. C. Eric Dering appeared, preceded Mr. Fred Terry and Miss Julian Neilson in the "Scarlet Pimpernel" and "Henry of Navarre."

The Drury Lane drama, "The Whip," was an unusually popular attraction. Subsequently Miss Cicely Hamilton, supported by Miss

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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Olive Terry and Mr. Charles Thursby, performed in the "Pageant of Great Women," arranged by Miss Edith Craig (daughter of Miss Ellen Terry), and amongst the local talent of "Great Women" were Mesdames Young, Dove-Willcox and F. W. Rogers, Miss Winifred Cridland, etc.

"The House of Temperley," in which Mr. Lionel Glenister played Captain Jack, preceded "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," a story which reads well but proves none too welcome as a stage picture. The "Grotesques" for a week, the customary amateur night, and then "Jack Horner." This was the last pantomime personal to the efforts of Mr. James Macready Chute, and, indeed, its production marked the close of his long and successful management. How he succeeded in his determination to produce this work was little short of a miracle, for, to use a well-known simile, he was "weak as a robin," his voice being so feeble as to necessitate the assistance of a megaphone in order to convey his instructions from the fauteuil which he occupied to Mr. Turner on the stage.

Representatives of the chief characters were Misses Winifred Ward, Esta Stella, Doris Dean and Marion Edwards, Messrs. Albert Le Fre, Charles McNaughton, Alfred Wellesley, Fred Allandale and Ernie Mayne, the pantomime, which was from the pen of Mr. J. Hickory Wood, being in evidence until March 4th, 1911.

The Beecham Opera Company, which on March 13th presented that brilliantly, delightful work, Offenbach's "Tales of Hoffmann," during the earlier nights of the week must have wondered whether Bristol had ever heard of either the opera or its composer, for the house was practically deserted. The last three nights produced overflowing audiences, which could not, however, rectify the early loss, or, incidentally, induce Sir Thomas Beecham to retain Bristol in his itinerary. On 27th Mr. George Edwardes' Company appeared in "The Quaker Girl," the Easter attraction being the thrilling play, "Arsene Lupin," with Miss Lilius Earle and Mr. Percy Hutchinson in the chief characters.

"The Girl in the Train" proved popular and well cast, Misses May de Sousa, Coralie Blyth and Louie Pounds sharing honours with Messrs. W. Talieir Andrews, Eric Thorne, George Gregory and W. H. Rawlins.

Much amusement was derived from the production of "The Brass Bottle," after which Miss Mary Dandridge and Mr. Mark Blow were seen in "Inconstant George," and then Miss Violet Vanbrugh in her great impersonation of Claire Forster, "The Woman in the Case." Miss Florence Lloyd, but recently seen here in pantomime, gave a most artistic rendering of the difficult part of Margaret Rolfe, and was very warmly applauded each evening.

"Dolly Reforming Herself" was seen at the Prince's for the first time on June 12th, the autumn season of 1911 opening with the comedy, "A Single Man," and on August 14th Mr. G. M. Polini's company returned with "The Silver King." There was an interesting episode associated with this visit, for whilst the company was due at the Elephant and

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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Castle Theatre, London, on the following Monday, a local strike of carters made it appear inevitable that their wardrobe and the scenery of the play could not be forwarded. The contracting firm for theatre work, and which had brought the goods, protested that if any men were employed for the removal, the strikers would certainly overturn the lorries, and possibly pitch their contents into the Floating Harbour.

Poor Polini, who was in ill health, and unusually low in funds, was distracted, having looked to the certainty of the London engagement to put him again in clover; but Mr. Albert Knee, of Knee Bros., came to his aid, personally leading the horse of the first of the lorries, and his son that of the second. The route was fringed from end to end with the picket of the strikers, and as the two employers, and *not hired labour*, wended their way, a respectful touch of the cap from these men gave assurance that all was well, and no "carter's union" rule infringed. Polini, on reaching London, wrote Mr. Knee a delightful letter of gratitude.

Here is an amusing anecdote of earlier days, when Mr. Polini was acting-manager for Mr. Wilson Barrett, a position which he held for many years, and which brought to him the acting rights of "The Silver King." Before going to Mr. Barrett's dressing-room with a return of the night's receipts, he was in the habit of putting a caraway, comfit, or a small peppermint into his mouth. One night, the business chat being at an end, and his acting-manager just opening the door to depart, Mr. Wilson Barrett thus recalled him: "I say, Polini, when you come again, for heaven sake come smelling of whisky; I infinitely prefer it to the stench of peppermint!"

Pinero's "Preserving Panmure" followed, the latter preceding Mr. Lawrence Irving and Miss Mabel Hackney in "The Unwritten Law." Then "The Chocolate Soldier" was first introduced here, also "A Butterfly on the Wheel," Miss Madge Titheradge appearing in the latter play.

Mr. Martin Harvey in "The Lowland Wolf," "Pelleas and Melisande" and "Hamlet" came next, and a fortnight later Mr. H. B. Benson was "The Melancholy Dane!" This double event threw one's mind back to the '60's, when actors were offering in multitude, whilst plays were very few! Somehow, I was impelled in these post Forbes Robertson days—days of levity, I suppose—to associate the comment of the evening newspaper boy on witnessing Shakespeare's masterpiece, and who, upon the development of the final episodes, called to his pal, elsewhere in the gallery, "What a night for extra specials!"

Maeterlinck's "The Blue Bird" was extensively patronized, there being some half-a-dozen of the original Haymarket exponents in the case. Miss Julia Neilson (Mr. Fred Terry being ill) came, accompanied by Mr. Norman McKinnel, in "The Popinjay."

Mr. Cyril Maude's matinee, with "Dad," was followed by Mr. Tom B.



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## The Bristol Stage

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Davis' pantomime, "Jack and the Beanstalk." There was an excellent company, including Misses Daisy Wood, Daisy Stratton, and Eleanor Wilson, with Messrs. Horace Mills, Edward Cridland, Jay Laurier, the Griffiths Bros., etc., the *mise en scene*, however, was not quite up to Prince's form!

A matinee, with Mlle. Pavlova, the charming *danseuse*, as was anticipated, filled the theatre in every part. On Shrove Tuesday there was another huge assembly at the Prince's, the occasion being a complimentary benefit to the popular but invalided manager.

**JAMES MACREADY CHUTE.**—Born at Bath, July 10th, 1856, this everywhere popular manager was the fifth son of Mr. J. H. Chute, and the last surviving of those who had associated themselves with the dramatic world.

As with his elder brother George, his education was for some time entrusted to Dr. Hudson, the well-known principal at Manilla Hall, Clifton; but subsequently, and for several terms, he was a pupil of Dr. Alcock, of Lord Weymouth's Grammar School, Warminster.

His desire was to become a civil engineer, preferably in India. The government examination was tackled quite successfully, but by the Medical Board his *physique* was regarded as unequal to the requirements of that trying climate.

Some years he spent in connection with the (then) Bristol and Exeter railway, of which Mr. T. W. Walton was general manager.

Some little time after taking up the reins of theatre management (it was during 1881, I think), the strain had told upon his health considerably, and he was ordered a trip through the Mediterranean district, returning to Bristol from which, he felt—to use a popular phrase—as fit as a fiddle!

In 1886 Mr. Chute married Miss Abigail Hennessy, daughter of Mr. Joseph Hennessy, of Clifton, the marriage ceremony at the pro-Cathedral, conducted by Monsignor Clarke, being witnessed by a large congregation of friends and well-wishers; the child of the marriage, a boy, Desmond Macready.

Mr. Chute in 1891—exactly a quarter of a century subsequent to a similar honour being conferred upon his father by brethren of the same lodge—was installed W.M. of the Jerusalem Lodge of Freemasons, and subsequently invested P.J.G.W. of the Province of Bristol; whilst in 1907 he occupied the presidential chair of the Bristol Hibernian Society, it becoming the pleasurable duty of the treasurer at the annual banquet, held at the Royal Hotel, to announce that the year's subscriptions to their deserving fund had created a record for the Society. I still have it in my mind that on this occasion the massive—and, indeed, mighty—goblet from which we, the assembled diners, whilst voicing "Success to the Hibernian Society," quaffed "Veuve Cliquot," was one presented

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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to the president's grandfather, and our old-time theatrical manager, Mr. William McCready, by the parish of St. Bridget, Dublin, for thus was it inscribed.

In 1903, in order to commemorate the twenty-fifth year of his management, he was presented with a charmingly designed rose-bowl, to the purchase of which each and every employee had become an insistent contributor. And again, in 1895, when Mrs. Chute had presented her lord and master with a son and heir, a similarly spontaneous co-operation had provided a suitable souvenir for the little stranger's use some few years hence.

And yet again, upon the celebration of Mr. and Mrs. Chute's silver wedding! Mr. Chute was then, however, in feeble health, and the pleasurable, if brief, ceremonial of the previous occasions was omitted.

He was Hon. Sec. to the Provincial Managers' Association, and their regret at his death was evinced in the floral tributes which arrived from all parts of the United Kingdom on the occasion of his funeral.

With Mrs. Chute and their one son—bearing the family name of Desmond—born September 11th, 1895, surviving him, Mr. Chute's death occurred at his residence, Abbeymeade, Tyndall's Park, on February 15th, 1912, the following Wednesday being devoted to his interment. The first part of the beautiful burial service was conducted by Canon Haigh, the Vicar, at St. Paul's Church, Clifton.

The tomb at Arno's Vale, in which the casket holding his remains was laid, was that already containing those of both his parents.

Mr. John Hart, who had during his friend's illness relieved him of many managerial anxieties, continued to assist Mrs. Chute in the management until February 15th, 1913, when a limited liability company was formed, Mrs. James Macready Chute and Mr. John Hart being elected joint general managers, Mr. George E. Davies, J.P., chairman, and the services of Mr. J. Ellis Miller retained as resident manager and treasurer.

**THE PRINCE'S THEATRE, LTD.**—The season opened on March 4th with "What Every Woman Knows," a week of Ibsen, with a large audience of children brought to see "The Doll's House," and next "The Count of Luxembourg." The "Witness for the Defence" from St. James's preceded the Shaftesbury production "The Mousme," with Miss Florence Smithson, Mr. Dan Rolyat and Mr. Alfred H. Majilton in their original parts. Mr. Cyril Maude at a matinee introduced "Over—and What Then?"

A complimentary benefit was given to Mr. F. S. Green, late acting manager and treasurer, on his leaving for London, whilst subsequently the Bristol Amateur Operatic Society performed "Don" and "Trial by Jury" in behalf of the funds of the Gloucestershire Cricket Club.

Bank Holiday saw "The Fire Screen," later engagements comprising "Priscilla Runs Away," "The Girl in the Train," "Fanny's First Play,"

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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the cast embracing Mr. A. B. Tapping; then came "At the Barn," and, from Drury Lane, "The Whip," appropriately enough followed by "A Member of Tattersalls," Mr. Rutland Barrington in his original character, Peter Perks.

A farewell, by Mr. Forbes Robertson, with "The Light that Failed." Then came Mlle. Anna Pavlova with full company of Russian dancers. "Kismet" preceded "Autumn Manœuvres," a capital play, finely presented, but since "out of bounds," as the public would judge it, after our Territorial's splendid efforts, as of "French's contemptible little army"! The play, with admirable scenery by Mr. Alfred Terraine, was in the hands of Misses Marie Dainton, Maude Harris, Eileen McCarthy and Louie Pounds, with whom were Messrs. Robert Evett, Leonard Mackay, Edward Gass, A. Bromley Davenport, Willie Warde, Huntley Wright and Lionel Mackinder, this, by the way, being the final occasion upon which the last-named was seen by a Bristol audience.

Mr. Laurence Irving and Miss Mabel Hackney (Mrs. Irving) appeared in a round of plays, "The Unwritten Law," "The Lily," and "The Barber of Seville" amongst the number. The sad fate of these two young and promising actors, who lost their lives whilst on their homeward voyage, owing to the collision of *The Empress of Ireland* mail steamship, on which they were travelling, whilst navigating the river St. Lawrence, is greatly to be deplored.

Mr. Martin Harvey produced "Oedipus Rex," "Milestones," and "Bunty Pulls the Strings" followed, and then we saw Mr. Tom B. Davis's pantomime, "Dick Whittington and his Cat."

Miss Dorothy Ward undertook the part of Dick, other characters being allotted to Miss Beatrice Collier and Messrs. Jack Hurst, William Pringle, Fame and Fortune, etc. The final performance was on March 1st, 1913, Miss Ethel Irving having during the previous week appeared at a matinee in the "Son and Heir."

"Everywoman," with Mr. Edward Compton as Nobody, followed the pantomime; then "Doormats," and next "Miss Hook of Holland," succeeded by "The Dancing Mistress" and "The Schoolmistress," by Sir Arthur Pinero, in which Miss Winifred Emery and Mr. Dion Boucicault appeared, was produced at a matinee, as was "Open Windows," with Miss Irene Vanburgh and Sir George Alexander.

"The Younger Generation" was followed by "The Pink Lady," Miss Hilda Vining and Mr. Fred Wright filling the more important rôles.

On May 3rd an instant success was secured with Franz Lehar's opera, "Gipsy Love," amongst those more particularly responsible for this being Miss Blanche Tomlin, Miss Avice Kelham, Miss Daisy Burrell and Messrs. Leonard Mackay, Ian Colquhoun, Kelso Henderson, and Lauri de Frece. "The Glad Eye" and Ibsen's plays followed.

The theatre closed for the summer vacation on June 21st, 1913, re-



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## *The Bristol Stage*

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opening on August 4th with Miss Haidee Gunn and Mr. Frank Royce, who introduced to the provinces Sidney Grundy's clever play, "Business is Business" and Somerset Maugham's "Penelope," "The Turning Point," Mr. Rupert Lister, and "The Great Adventure," with Mr. Shiel Barry, son of the famous Gaspard, in "Les Cloches de Corneville," Michael Feeney, etc. "A Scrape of the Pen" and "Oh! oh! Delphine," preceded Sir George Alexander, introducing "Bella Donna," and this was the last appearance of the distinguished actor-manager on the Bristol stage.

SIR GEORGE ALEXANDER, although not a Bristolian, could claim some interesting associations with the city during his youth and early manhood, having for some time been educated by Dr. Benham, a well-known schoolmaster of St. Michael's Hill, and with whose son, Dr. ~~William~~ *Harry* Benham, late chief medical officer at the Bristol County Lunatic Asylum—now better known as the Beaufort War Hospital—Sir George maintained friendly relations until his friend's death. Education was continued at Clifton College, and from there the distinguished actor had many admirers at his performances. Amongst the honours conferred upon him by his fellow countrymen was that of (hon.) LL.D. of Bristol University.

Born on June 10th, 1858, "Who's Who" states his birthplace to have been Reading, and in all probability that information is correct; still, I think that much of his youth must have been spent in Stroud, as in a chat with Mr. George R. Chapman some few years since Sir George related how, soon after securing his histrionic popularity, he entertained the desire to show Stroud—"My native town," he said—a really representative performance of "Hamlet." For this purpose he engaged a company calculated to give as perfect a reading of the masterpiece as could be desired. Every seat in the hall was filled, but amongst the earliest patrons to secure a front row stall was a sports companion of his boyhood—one, moreover, who maintained the Zider country's characteristics to the full. He occupied the moments prior to the rise of the curtain with details of the exploits of "me and Jarge," and through the earlier acts was so embarrassing with his constant "braveo Jarge," that he had to be removed.

For the first time during the performance Sir George was enabled to breathe freely. Presently, however, from the back of the hall came the familiar voice, "Braveo, Jarge, it be all right! Oi be in again."

Although I never regarded Sir George Alexander as a great actor, he was unquestionably a good one, and in "The Importance of being Earnest" and "The Prisoner of Zenda" his impersonation could hardly be excelled. During the concluding years of his generally fine management he produced a series of plays better suited to the morals of Mayfair and St. John's Wood than to Bristol. I was not alone in thinking this,

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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for upon the performance here of "John Glayde's Honour" Mr. Chute informed him that he would book no more such pieces. Possibly Sir George saw the position in the same light, for his reply was, "There are no more."

Sir George Alexander—Samson being the family name, abandoned upon his association with the stage—died March 9th, 1918.

"Oh, I Say" was followed by Miss Ellaline Terris and Mr. Seymour Hicks in "Broadway Jones." Written by Mr. J. James Hewson, the pantomime "Robinson Crusoe" was staged with some telling scenery by Messrs. R. C. Oldham and D. G. Hall. This was the first Christmas production for which Mrs. James Macready Chute and Mr. John Hart assumed the responsibility. With Miss Dorothy Craske as Robinson, Miss Nellie Taylor as Pollie Hopkins, Bristol's favourite, Mr. W. H. Rawlins, the Will Atkins; the Brothers Haytor, Friday and Saturday; Miss Lilian Pollard, Miss Constance Caley, Messrs. Harry Dent, Fred Dark, the Astons and "Pip" Powell in the cast, the Christmas annual went bravely, and was welcomed as a pantomime redivivus!

There was a flying matinee by Mr. Tom B. Davis's company in "A Place in the Sun," Mr. Robert Loraine appearing as Dick Blair, and a further matinee by Miss Mary Moore in "Mrs. Gorrings's Necklace," the last performance of "Robinson Crusoe" being given on February 28th, 1914.

Mr. Robert Courtneidge's Shaftesbury Theatre success, "The Pearl Girl," was followed by "Where the Rainbow Ends," three matinee performances being given during the week, whilst on March 30th "Within the Law," a production from the Haymarket, was sent by Sir Herbert Tree, its producer, and Mr. Michael Faraday.

Mr. Henry Arthur Jones' new comedy "Mary Goes First," was followed by the musical play, "The Girl who Didn't," which brought us face to face with some rare old favourites in Mr. T. W. Volt and Miss Nellie Bouverie (Mrs. Volt), the latter being the Sinbad of 1879-80.

The Moody Manners Opera Company, with whom came Mlles. Zelig De Lussan and Marian de Kleno, presented quite a novel programme, embracing Saint Saen's "Samson and Delilah," Wilhelm Kienzl's "The Pious Beggar," Mendelssohn's "Elijah," and Kienzl's "The Dance of Death," each of which was seen in Bristol for the first time, and in the last-named Miss Fanny Moody made her one appearance during the week. Of course, there was an evening with "Carmen," Zelig De Lussan, best of all Carmens, in the title part, and with "Faust," Mr. Charles Manners being the Mephisto of the occasion. Prices of admission were as usual, an opportunity which appealed, especially for the "old favourites" in the week's programme.

In the "Marriage Market," a George Edwardes' production from Daly's, Mrs. Victor Jacobi had provided some exceedingly pretty numbers, the cast, generally an efficient one, embracing Miss Nellie Taylor,

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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who filled the chief rôle, Mariposa Gilroy. Miss Nellie Taylor had not long relinquished the part of Polly Hopkins in the pantomime, and met with cordial recognition at her appearance.

"Princess Caprice," a musical work from the Shaftesbury, preceded "The Ever Open Door," a drama by George R. Sims and H. H. Herbert, which had proved congenial fare at the Aldwych. It was effectively produced here, and proved much to the taste of the popular parts of the house.

"Lady Frederick," "All-of-a-Sudden-Peggy," and "The Toymaker of Nuremberg," and then Mr. Leonard Boyne appeared as Dr. Lucius O'Grady in the Irish comedy, from the pen of Canon Hannay (writing under the nom-de-plume of "George A. Birmingham"), "General John Regan."

Cavaliere F. Castellano brought an excellent Grand Italian Opera Company, and the spring season of 1914 closed on June 20th.

On August 11th, 1914, Mr. Alexander Marsh introduced Sir George Alexander's success, "If I were King," which was followed by the farcical "Who's the Lady?" Walter Howard's "Story of the Rosary" coming next, and subsequently "The Girl from Utah," with Mr. Horace Mills. Mr. Lewis Waller was accompanied by Miss Evelyn D'Alroy for his farewell in "Monsieur Beaucaire," the week witnessing the production by them of a new play, "The Other Side of Love." "Grumpy," an excellent comedy, came next, and then "Sealed Orders" preceded "A Pair of Silk Stockings." In "Eliza Comes to Stay" Miss Eva Moore had with her Mr. H. V. Esmond and Mr. E. W. Garden, whilst from November 16th "The Great Adventure," with Shiel Barry, constituted the week's programme.

"The Land of Promise," by W. Somerset Maugham, followed Mr. Fred Terry and Miss Julia Neilson in "Sweet Nell of Old Drury" and "The Scarlet Pimpernel," whilst "Officer 666," with Mr. Percy Hutchison, preceded the pantomime "Humpty Dumpty," written by Messrs. Hickory Wood and R. C. Oldham, the latter being responsible also for the exceedingly charming scenery. Miss Dorothy Ward and Mr. Shann Glenville were the principals, and the popular production held the stage until the close of February, matinees being given by Miss Violet Vanbrugh and Mr. Arthur Bourchier with "The Double Mystery" and of "La Cloître" by the Belgian players.



## CHAPTER XXIII

A.D. 1915

MR. H. B. IRVING followed the pantomime with "Searchlights," and then came Mrs. Hodgson Burnett's charming play "Little Lord Fauntleroy," the clever authoress devoting the whole of her fees to the Red Cross Fund. "The Chocolate Soldier" came next upon the scene, and then that remarkable play "Mr. Wu," both Miss Hutin Britton and Mr. Matheson Lang being seen in their original characters. "The Earl and the Girl" gave way to Bernard Shaw's "Pygmalion," the arresting expletive in which had led to its immediate reputation now coming from the lips of Miss Dorothy Dix.

"The Pearl Girl," from the Shaftesbury was followed by "Partners," whilst "The Road to Raebury" introduced Mr. Milton Rosmer and Miss Irene Rooke, and was followed by the St. James's production, "The Day before the Day," not however one of the most successful ventures of Sir George Alexander; but "A Butterfly on the Wheel" was a telling Globe production by Lewis Waller.

Miss Eva Moore and Mr. H. V. Esmond were seen in "When we were Twenty-one," "On Trial" following, and preceding "The Spanish Main" with Miss Lily Brayton and Mr. Oscar Asche, whilst Mr. Lawrence Brough, with "The Green Flag," followed. "The Angel in the House" brought the return of Mr. H. B. Irving, he being accompanied by Lady Tree, this being succeeded by a capital comedy by Max Martin-dale entitled "Gamblers All." "The Cinema Star" from the Shaftesbury arrived afterwards, and then "Betty," presented by an excellent company, "Peg o' my Heart" being billed for November 8th.

"Find the Woman," by Miss Violet Vanbrugh, Richard Dexter being in the hands of Mr. Arthur Bouchier, came next, and was followed by "To-night's the Night" from the Gaiety. "The Light Blues," with Misses Dorothy Ward, Cicely Courtneidge and Rose Edouin, and Messrs. Shaun, Glenville, Edmund Gween, Fred Lewis, etc., scarcely promised success for the Shaftesbury, whither it was bound for "production"; but "The Man who Stayed at Home," Mr. George Tully playing Christopher Brent, proved a pronounced success.

"Goody Two Shoes" was the subject of the pantomime, chief among its exponents being Misses Sybil Arundale and Daisy Dormer, with Messrs. Lupino, Lane and Horace Mills. The annual ran right merrily until

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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March 1st, 1916, a matinee with "Stop Thief" being given during its series of performances.

"Quinneys" preceded "The Marriage Market," Miss Annie Saker and Mr. Walter Howard in "The Silver Crucifix," "More," "Tina," an Adelphi musical play, represented by Miss Dorothy Ward, together with Messrs. George Gregory and Vernon Davidson, whilst Mr. John Glendenning closed the season on June 17th with Mr. Edward E. Rose's play "The Rosary."

The reopening was with "A Little Bit of Fluff," followed by "Ye Gods," "The Only Girl," from the Apollo, being next on the scene. Miss Violet Vanbrugh brought "Mrs. Pomeroy's Reputation," and "We Can't be as Bad as all That," and on October 23rd, 1916, "Mr. Manhattan" became the attraction, to be succeeded by "The Happy Day," with Mr. Horace Mills.

"Kultur at Home," "Hobson's Choice," and "Caroline," the last-named from the New Theatre, preceded "Cinderella," the annual pantomime. Mr. R. C. Oldham this year was not only responsible for a well-told story, but had provided the lyrics also, had designed the costumes, and clothed the work in some charming scenery. Miss Queenie Wynne impersonated the heroine, Mr. Jack Pleasants as Muggles, Miss Louie Beckman, Prince; Miss Hilda Eager, Fairy Queen; and Mr. Dillon, Shallard, Herne the Hunter. The work was produced under the stage-management of Mr. J. Logan, a Bristol citizen, long associated with His Majesty's Theatre and the Coliseum, London.

Miss Violet Farebrother followed in "Romance"; next, quite appropriately, came "A Kiss for Cinderella." From Wyndham's we received "The Old Country," and on March 29th came "My Lady Frayle," with Miss Phyllis le Grand and Mr. Arnold Richardson. The Adelphi scream, "High Jinks," brought Miss Dorothy Shale and Mr. Vernon Davidson, and was succeeded by a charming representation by Miss Mary Merrall and Mr. Franklin Dyll of the play "Daddy-long-legs."

"The Maid of the Mountains" came from Daly's, and there was an acceptable bit of melodrama in "Tiger's Cub," admirably portrayed by Miss Elsie Hewitt and Mr. Sam Livesey. "Outcast" followed, with Miss Muriel Johnston.

This was succeeded by "Strings," a pronounced change of programme, as was "Kick-in," not a football play, but a moderately good drama, with, for English, a meaningless title, the D'Oyly Carte Company next paying their customary visit, and this being the last occasion upon which the familiar figure of Mr. Fred Billington was seen in Bristol. He appeared as Shadbolt in "Yeomen of the Guard" on the concluding evening, and shortly afterwards died suddenly.

Mr. Matheson Lang, in "Under Cover," preceded "The Aristocrat," from St. James's, with Miss Genevieve Ward in her original part. Sir George Alexander had purposed touring also in this, but his condition of

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## The Bristol Stage

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health had made it obvious to those about him that he would never act again. This gave rise to an awkward situation, for the Duchess de Autevielle, the character represented by Miss Ward, is presumed guillotined at the conclusion of the second act, and at the St. James's it had been Miss Ward's custom to here bow her acknowledgments and so retire from the scene, leaving Sir George, who finished the play, to do duty upon the final fall of the curtain. I was engaged in a chat with the lady during the third act, assuming that her labours of the evening were at an end, when she observed "I must now get ready for the ghost." Probably I looked my want of comprehension, as she continued, "*Somebody* must take the call at the end of the play, and Sir George not being with us, I have to do so; being dead, however, I regard the appearance as that of my ghost."

Quite an amusing play was "Anthony in Wonderland," which followed, Miss Alice Russon and Mr. Charles Troode being effective in their respective parts. "What a Catch" and "Young England" preceded the celebration of

THE PRINCE'S JUBILEE.—To have been strictly in accordance with the calendar, this event should have been allocated to October 14th, but the programme of November 5th offered a far more suitable performance for such an occasion. The play was "Rosemary," a charming idyll, from the joint pens of Mr. Louis N. Parker and Murray Carson, and which had made a great impression when the latter, appearing as Sir Jasper Thorndyke, first brought it to Bristol in 1896. Besides being a really good actor, Mr. Murray Carson was a brave Briton, for like Lionel Mackinder, when the war broke out he *camouflaged* his fifty years and joined up. It was not his fate to die upon the field of battle, but it was whilst yet upon military duty, when commanding a detachment at Canterbury camp. But to return to his delightful play! Sir Charles Wyndham and Miss Mary Moore appeared in it at the Prince's, in 1903, and it was then voiced as the pick of the basket of their repertoire. Sir Jasper on this (Jubilee) occasion was in the hands of Mr. Martin Harvey.

There was a brief speech, appropriate to the occasion, from the Rt. Wor. the Lord Mayor, and to signalize the event each of the Prince's Theatre employees was in receipt of a *douceur* in the shape of an additional week's salary. They, on the other hand, had arranged a little surprise for Mrs. Chute, and upon the fall of the curtain on Saturday night the whole of those interested, from joint managing director downwards, were assembled upon the stage, and the managing directress, all unsuspecting, being lured to the rendezvous, after a few felicitous words from Mr. J. Ellis Miller, received at his hands the staff's "surprise packet"—a very handsome silver timepiece, together with a morocco-bound volume containing a memento address, as also the autograph signatures of the participators in this project.



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## *The Bristol Stage*

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The Prince's Theatre throughout the years of war extended a hearty welcome to the wounded of our brave defenders, the proceeds of a Cinderella matinee, February 20th, 1917, realizing £161 3s. 6d. towards the Lord Kitchener Memorial Fund; "Oh, I See," an amateur effort, capitally performed by members of the A.S.C. Tractor Department, Avonmouth, brought £144 7s. for the Inquiry Bureau Fund, and a *M(ade) O(ur) N(ation) S(afe)* matinee of "Old King Cole," January 29th, 1918, a further £83 16s. 1d. for the same object; whilst an amateur pantomime, "Aladdin," performed on February 20th by the "Jolly Waterman Concert Party," from the White City, realized £173 12s. 11d. for the C.C. Fund of the Bristol T. & M.; whilst the Jubilee celebration contributed to King George's Fund for Sailors, and in December, £200 to those of the Red Cross and St. John Ambulance Societies.

In the September of 1914, a steady stream of invalided soldiers having set in towards the Bristol War Hospitals, the Inquiry Bureau, a committee of voluntary workers, came into existence. Mr. Manny Epstein, the indefatigable organizer of the entertaining department, had been able to arrange invites for no less than 12,000 wounded heroes to visit the Prince's Theatre, whilst nearly 600 professional entertainments for the benefit of those as yet unable to leave their beds were given at the hospitals!

A most interesting feature of the Jubilee functions was the exceptional number of histrionic faces familiar in by-gone years which one encountered once more in our midst. In the recent production of "Cinderella" was Mr. J. F. McArdle, seen in "Sinbad" in 1898; Mr. E. W. Colman, who brought "What a Catch," was in "Cinderella" in 1883; Mr. E. Story Gofton, "Old King Cole," produced "Jack and the Beanstalk" in 1880, and was the Wolf of "Red Riding Hood" in 1885; Mr. T. W. Thompson and Mr. Fred Haylor were in "Cinderella" in 1895, and Mr. George Miller, in "Old King Cole," played in "The Sleeping Beauty" 1904, and in "Jack and Gill" 1907. With "Merrie England" came Mr. Horace Lingard, a Bristolian in Mr. Chute's Theatre Royal Company in 1858; in the "Aristocrat" was Miss Genevieve Ward, well on in her eighty-first year. With a vivacity which readily recalled the charm of her earlier years, Miss Ellen Terry, within a couple of months of her seventieth year, was performing at the Hippodrome. Moreover, Mrs. Bishop-Lohr—Miss Kate Bishop of the Theatre Royal Company in 1860, but now retired from her distinguished stage career, favoured the Prince's auditorium, as did Miss Mary E. Griffiths, who took part in the performance of the "Tempest" at the opening of the Park Row Theatre in 1867.

"The Bing Boys are Here" was followed by "Seven Days' Leave," whilst "London Pride" preceded the pantomime "Old King Cole" above referred to. Miss Beatrice Allen proved a delightful Prince Ardent, the graceful dancing of Miss Renee Reel, the Princess, was most acceptable, and the great and humorous ability of both Mr. Arnold Richardson

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## The Bristol Stage

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and Mr. George Miller would have carried a much heavier burden to success.

Very early in the year 1918 came a special matinee "Mons," or, as the management aptly announced it, "M(ade) O(ur) N(ation) S(afe), Star" day, and of this "star" celebration I believe Bristol can claim the initiative. The day, a full one, with pageant of the heroes of Britain's "contemptible little army," many yet in khaki, some returned to civilian life, others (alas!) still dependent upon conveyances, proceeding through the leading thoroughfares, cheered by the thousands who had taken no part in the historic triumphs. To the Cathedral, for thanksgiving, then the Prince's, tea at the Art Gallery, and Hippodrome to wind up with. Seven hundred of the brave fellows gave unstinted applause to "Old King Cole," as did others of the vast audience to them.

The spring season 1918 opened with "Toto," in which Miss Doris Lee and Mr. Louis Bradfield were seen; "Wild Heather," a romantic play, with Miss Violet Graham and Charles Barrett in the leading parts, followed. "The Boy" was a musical comedy on unfamiliar lines, and popular Mr. Fred Terry, with whom was Miss Violet Farebrother, next playing an exceedingly successful week with "Sweet Nell of Old Drury" and the "Scarlet Pimpernel." "Carminetta" was followed by "Theodore & Co.," "A Southern Maid," a work of exceptional charm, finely represented and admirably produced, coming next. Of the principals engaged in this light opera, besides Miss Gracie Sinclair and Messrs. John Doran, Tom A. Shale and William Spray was Miss Jessie Lonnen, who by descent we claim as of our own, she being the daughter of Mrs. E. J. Lonnen, the Emmie Inman who delighted her fellow-citizens and others around and about 1880.

The following week witnessed the performance, for the first time on any stage, of "Money for Nothing!" a camouflage title for "The Money Makers," presented *ipsissima verba* at the Prince's in 1904.

"The Better 'Ole," with a remarkably convincing impersonation of "Old Bill" by Mr. Martin Adeson, proved an immediate and consistently extending attraction.

"The 13th Chair," an American detective play, in which Miss Madge Titheradge appeared, as did Mrs. Patrick Campbell in December, was followed by "The Jeffersons," likewise of trans-Atlantic origin. From the pen of Vincent Douglas, whose age was stated to be eighteen years, the "Jeffersons" proved to be an admirably constructed and interesting comedy, the weight of which rested on Mr. J. L. Shine—who shone!

During the recess there was an amateur pageant in which many juveniles took part, upwards of £350 being contributed to the fund for "Waifs and Strays."

The Bank Holiday of 1918 brought "Bubbly," Miss Irene Vanbrugh following (at a matinee) with Sir J. M. Barrie's dainty playlets "The Twelve Pound Cook" and "Seven Women."

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## *The Bristol Stage*

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In "Betty at Bay" Miss Christine Silver gave a really delightful interpretation of the heroine's part, and was admirably supported by the other members of the company.

The "Lilac Domino," produced at the beginning of October, was a work of undoubted merit, Mr. Harry B. Smith being responsible for the libretto and Mr. Charles Cavillier for the music. It was most effectively represented by the Misses Grace Gordon, Lillie Ansell, and Dorothy Craske, with Messrs. Jack Lennol, Frederick Granger and Thorpe Mayne. The Carl Rosa Company introduced "Madame Butterfly," and—for the first time in England (and probably the last in Bristol)—Philpot's opera "Dante and Beatrice." The concluding item of the week, "Maritana," was performed before a large audience, although from and including that evening, in consequence of the influenza epidemic, all places of amusement were ruled "out of bounds" for the naval and military forces, whilst admission was refused to juveniles. A return of the "Maid of the Mountains" encountered the announcement of the Armistice!

Mr. Martin Harvey appeared in two new plays, the "Raparee Trooper" and the "Burgomaster of Stalemonde," the latter from the pen of Maeter-nich; whilst a matinee during his engagement revived "Rosemary," and added £200 to the funds of the Red Cross and the St. John Ambulance funds. "General Post" was staged on December 2nd, and most convincingly acted by Miss Psyche Le Mesurier and Miss Dorothy Thomas, Mr. George Goodwin, Mr. J. Knox, and Messrs. Ordey, J. Charles, J. Barker, Paul Laurence and Charles Seymour.

The pantomime of "Sinbad," for the entire book and entirely charming costume designs of which Mr. R. A. Oldham was again responsible, and for which Mr. Jackson, with Mr. Cox, had executed some capital scenery, was produced on December 23rd. The company worked with a will, the chief characters being assigned to Miss Daisy Wood, Miss Beatrice Hope, Miss Muriel Langley, Mr. Albert Le Fre, Mr. Edward Lewis, Mr. William Stephens, and Mr. John Morley.



## INDEX

Actors' salaries (1850-1860), 52  
 Addison, Miss Carlotta, 67  
 Alexander, Sir George, 196  
 Arnold, Charles, 183  
 Arts Club, The, 130  
 As you like it, 30

Balcony arrives, The, 116  
 Barraud, Mark, 132  
 Bath and Bristol, 29  
 Blake, Mr., 17  
 Brunton, J., 36

Chapman, George, 175  
 Chute, George Macready, 145  
 Chute, Charles Kean, 171  
 Chute, James Henry, 110  
 Chute, James Macready, 193  
 Chute, Stephen Macready, 169  
 Chute, The Brothers Macready, 115  
 Chute, Mrs., 108  
 Clarke, Mr., 16  
 Cleveland, Miss, 55  
 Coghlan, Charles, 60  
 Conscious Lovers, The, 17, 25  
 Conway, Hugh, 130  
 Cross, Miss Emily, 80

Early Doors, 124  
 Elliston, Mr., 33

Fisher, Walter Henry, 139  
 Flitch of Bacon, The, 32  
 Fosbrooke, William, 161

Green, Mrs., 16  
 Golden Fleece, 70

Hallam, Miss, 16  
 Hale, Mr., 15  
 Haviland, William, 168  
 Hippisley, John, 12  
 Hodson, Miss Henrietta, 58, 64

Jacob's Well, 12  
 Jacon in Colchis, 70

Kendal, W. H., 186  
 King, Thomas, 15

Lady of Munster, The, 69

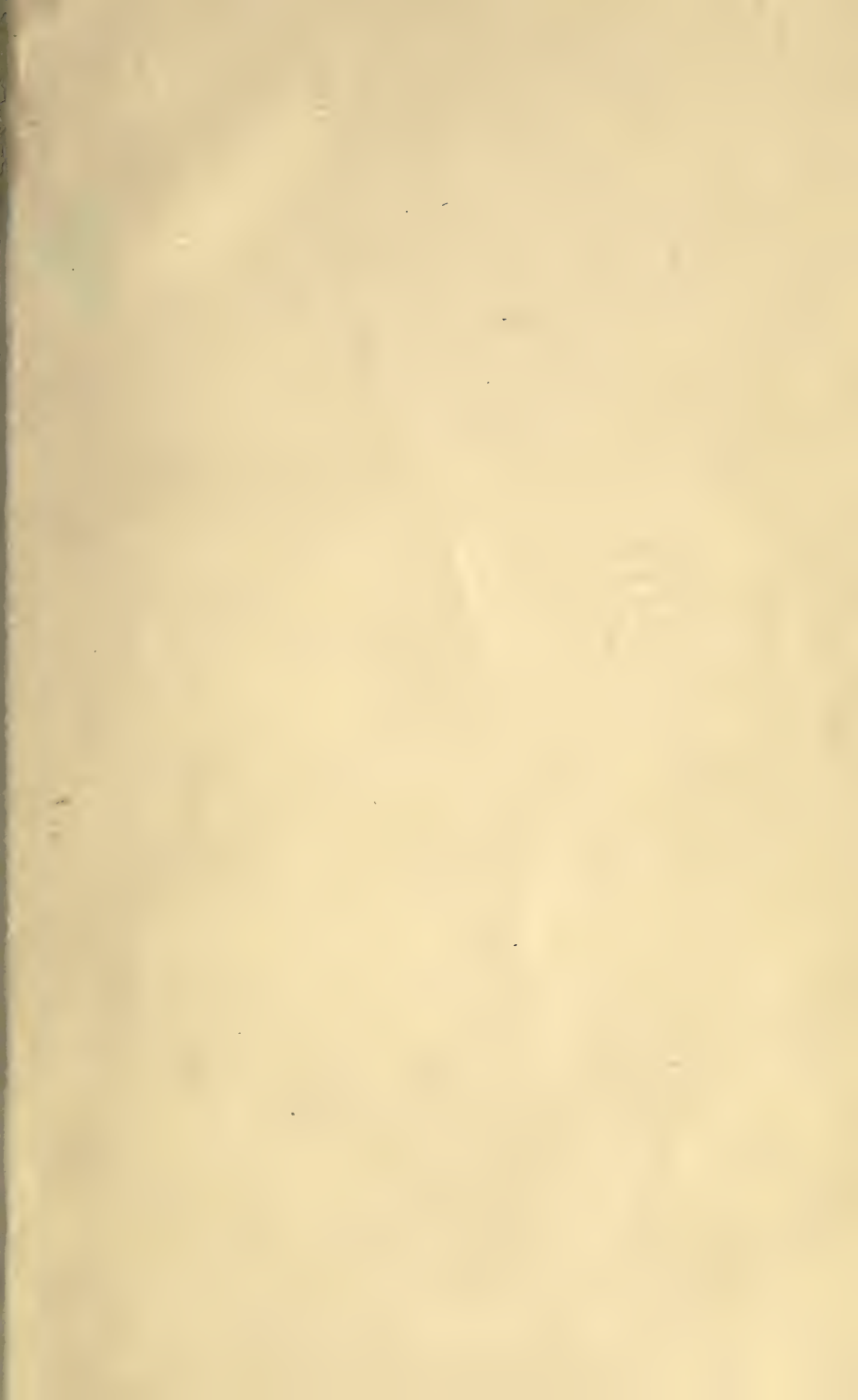
Macklin, Mr., 13  
 Madem Dominique, 20  
 Maid of Palaiseau, 38  
 Mandlebert, Miss, 51  
 Mattocks, Mr., 17  
 Medea in Corinth, 70  
 Melville, George, 48  
 McCready, William, 34  
 McCready, Mrs., 37

---

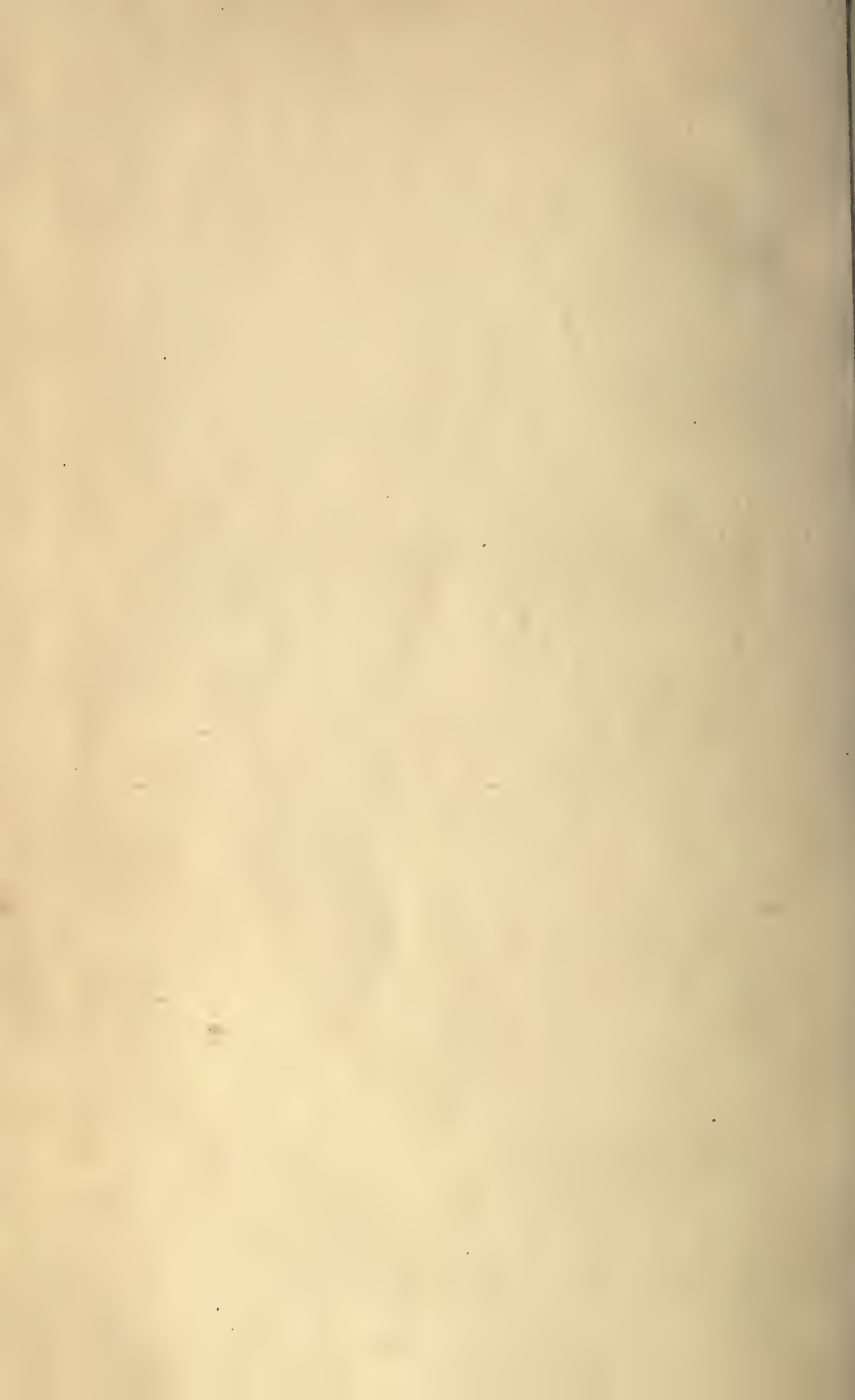
## *Index*

---

- New Princes, The, 173  
New Stage, A., 141  
New Theatre Royal, opening of, 72  
  
Palmer, Mr., 17  
Perfection, 69  
Pitt, Mrs., 17  
Powell, William, 27  
Prince's Jubilee, The, 201  
Princes, The, 130  
Prince's Theatre, Ltd., The, 194  
Pritchard, Mrs., 14  
Pritchard, Miss, 16  
  
Refreshment Rooms, The, 123  
Rignold, George, 58  
Rignold, William, 56  
Rosco, Mr., 15  
Rough Diamond, A, 79  
Rouse, John, 136  
Roused Lion, The, 69  
  
Shakespeare, Wm., 11  
She Stoops to Conquer, 32  
Shuter, Mr., 28  
Spanish Lover, The, 32  
Stokes Croft Theatre, 19  
Sullivan, Barry, 82  
  
Tempest, 76  
Terry, Miss Ellen, 60  
Terry, Miss Kate, 60  
  
Ward, Miss Genevieve, 125  
Watson, John Boles, 34  
Willes, Miss Louise, 87  
Wilton, Miss Marie, 44  
Winstone, Richard, 16  
Woodward, Mr., 14  
  
Vernon, W. H., 156  
Virtue Betrayed, 21  
Vollaire, 43









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